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Towards a “visual turn” in urban studies? Photographic approaches

Abstract

How do researchers use photography in contemporary urban studies? What methodological and epistemological problems does it rise? How does photography change the conditions, rules, objectives and formats of urban knowledge? After a brief historical overview, the editorial presents how the five contributions of this issue answer these questions.

Keywords

Photography, Urban studies, Methods, Image, City

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In the field of urban studies, images are intrinsically related to knowledge, thought and action. From the Renaissance up to the Second World War, urban planning has been built, both as a profession and as an expertise, on a common basis of visual representations, which were used by planners to visualize the physical, social or economic dimensions of space, and to project objects into it (Söderström, 2000). Until recently, the position of photography and film within this iconography, which was dominated by the codes of architectural design and cartography, remained marginal (Cuny, Nez, 2013). Nevertheless, since its inception in the 19th century, photography has been used by public administrations in order to keep records of built heritage that risked being lost to future generations because of the major transformations affecting industrial cities during this period. Several picture-taking missions focusing on monuments or entire neighbourhoods were conducted in France and in other European countries. Whereas the first of these mostly used architectural drawings to document this heritage, the French Heliographic Mission made a systematic record based on photographs (de Mondernard, 1997). Closer to our time, the workshop conducted by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown in Las Vegas in the 1970s consisted in exploring The Strip using films and photographs taken from a moving car (Venturi, Scott Brown, Izenour, 1972). More recently, several scholars have used photography as a research method in order to study urban transformations at different levels (Jarrigeon, 2012; Cuny, Färber, Hägele, 2014; Suchar, 2004), the social use of the domestic sphere (Bonnin, 2007), city memories (Petiteau, Pasquier 2007; Barrère, Levy-Vroelant, 2012) or the social life of cafés and bars (Conord, Steiner, 2010). How do researchers use photography in contemporary urban studies? What methodological and epistemological problems does it raise?

Each of the articles collected in this issue gives a specific answer to these questions. They deal with various types of urban spaces: territories (Ballif), public spaces (Monnet, Schöpfer) and domestic spaces (Jonas, Noël). They use photography as a means to describe urban space and, in so doing, they reflect more generally on the products of social science research: “The semiotic status [of photography] creates an effect of distance, which increases the effect of designation” (Piette, 2007). Indeed, the function of photography is to *show*, but both the photographer and the viewer play a role in the production of meaning. For this reason, Nadja Monnet prefers to talk about “data production” instead of “data collection”. She combines images and sounds in order to reflect the urban dynamics at play in Barcelona’s Plaça de Catalunya. The observation of what happens in this square is closely linked to the photographer’s eye and ear. By combining the two, the author manages to capture the visual and acoustic atmospheres of the place in their smallest details, confirming Albert Piette’s assertion that photography enables us to grasp the “minor-key variations of reality” (1992). But researchers are also interested in the capacity of photography to attest that “what [we see] has actually been” (Barthes, 1982), that is to say its link with memory. Irène Jonas and Jean-François Noël have used photography in one such perspective. In their work, photography seeks both to enrich the description of private spaces and to demonstrate the different types of narratives that emerge from the spatial arrangements of photographs and objects that link Chilean exiles in France to their country of origin. In photographing these objects, these two researchers capture images of memories and the way these memories materialize from a particular spatial arrangement. These images show how people make sense of their lives through visual and spatial narratives, and how they relate to the spaces that they have made

for themselves. Nevertheless, taking photographs in domestic as well as public spaces can also lead people to take on the roles of various characters. In her study on the *peacelines* of Belfast, Florine Ballif tried to understand the way in which these barriers are produced politically and technically. Her photography aimed to document their physical properties. But, by opposing scientific and “artistic” photographs, she also addressed the supposed “neutrality” of photographic documentation. Photography is not a transparent reproduction of reality, as the photographer produces a situated view of it, which takes on technical, social and ethical dimensions (Conord, 2007). Photography can also be used in more collaborative research approaches – for instance, where interviewees photograph their own city or neighbourhood. In one such project, Isabelle Schöpfer combined the devices of *auto-photography* (Noland, 2006) and *photo-elicitation* (Collier, 1967; Duteil-Ogata, 2007): she asked participants to go for a walk in their neighbourhood and take their own photographs, which were then elicited during an interview. Photography conveys emotions and memories, and makes people reflect upon their own choices and practices. It can be placed at the centre of exchanges between researcher and participant (Conord, 2000) and can foster discussion on how to represent a specific place, its inhabitants and its physical, social or historical properties. However, there are no contributions in this issue that consider photography solely as a research method. In the field of urban studies, the scientific use of photography is increasing while the dominance of mapping and architectural drawing are conversely being called into question. As digital technologies spread into public administrations during the 1990s, they profoundly transformed the codes of conventional systems of representation in urban planning. Indeed, they promoted images that seemed to be closer to the shared visual experience, as they showed urban objects from a pedestrian point of view (Bailleul, 2008). During the 19th century, increasing mobility, the rise of urban sprawl and the diversification of lifestyles also changed the urban experience and urban morphology in such a way that the idea of “city”, considered as a continuous and dense built-up area that we can clearly differentiate from countryside, is now challenged. Not surprisingly, therefore, a number of authors regularly remind us of the diminishing capacity of scientific and professional imagery to grasp contemporary social and urban phenomena (Lussault, 2007). In such a context, how does photography change the conditions, rules, objectives and formats of urban knowledge?

Each article presented here shows how the use of photography leads to experimentation of new ways of publishing the results of research in the social sciences and that this question can by no means be reduced to a “simple” communication or drafting issue. As exemplified by Nadja Monnet’s work, taking photographs and capturing sounds reshapes the entire research design, as it forces the researcher to refine the research questions and categories considered. In this case, it also involves the reader/viewer in the dynamics that make the central square of Barcelona a public space, as the images and sounds captured represent the bodies and interactions that can be observed and heard in the square, forming a collection of signs that the reader must decipher. By considering her audio-visual essay as a research result, as she would a map or a table, the author also assigns new objectives to her research: it aims both to answer a research question (to what extent do the social interactions that take place in a public space contribute to its social production?) and to produce a representation of the research object: a public space. In a similar manner, descriptions, excerpts from interviews and photographs are intertwined in Irène Jonas and Jean-François

Noël's article, showing that photography contributes to the same extent as researchers' texts or interviewees' voices to the representation of the four types of "decorative figures" that are explored in their paper. Although Isabelle Schöpfer did not produce any of the photographs she analyses in her article, we also find a representation device at the core of her research design: by asking participants to make their own photographs of their neighbourhoods, she uses photography as a laboratory that enables her to observe how "neighbourhood images" emerge from everyday practice, social interaction and public discourse. Finally, Florine Ballif asks explicitly how the social practice of photography reshapes the researcher's position regarding the field and, more generally, the relation between knowledge and society. Her article shows how the social interactions induced by the use of photography changed her position, which evolved from an initial stance that was falsely objective and disembodied to one that was ultimately more socially and spatially situated and engaged.

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Capturing neighbourhood images through photography

Abstract

This paper seeks to present and discuss a specific methodological approach based on photography, which draws on a method that combines auto-photography during photo-walks with photo-elicitation interviews. The method was used in the framework of a study that explored how families, living in the city of Geneva, Switzerland, make sense of their everyday practiced space, and how this informs us on knowledge about neighbourhood images in the context of lived space. The paper discusses the roles, benefits and challenges of the combined use of words and pictures, as well as the practice of taking pictures as a research tool and practice.

Keywords

Visual methods, Auto-photography, Photo-elicitation, Photo-walk, Neighbourhood images

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Photography as a research tool and practice to explore sense making of everyday lived space

The aim of this paper is to present and discuss a methodological approach based on photography (Blinn & Harrist 1991; Pink 2001, 2011, 2013; Crang 2003; Rose 2010, 2011), and to discuss the roles, benefits and challenges of photography as a research tool and practice. Through my research, I developed a method, which combines auto-photography and photo-walks with photo-elicitation interviews (Aitken & Wingate 1993, Harper 2002; Latham 2003; Mogensen 2012; Lombard 2013). Whereas auto-photography is photography carried out by the participants themselves (Aitken & Wingate 1993; Dodman 2003; Warren 2005; Noland 2006; Johnsen, May & Cloke 2008; Mogensen 2012), photo-elicitation is a method characterised by the introduction of photographs in the interview situation (Collier 1967; Harper 2002; Loeffler 2005; Duteil-Ogata 2007; Van Auken, Frisvoll & Stewart 2010; Rose 2011; Bigando 2013). The approach I elaborated was used to generate a better understanding of how families, living in different neighbourhoods of the city of Geneva, Switzerland, make sense of everyday practiced and lived space (Harrison 2000; Holloway & Hubbard 2000; Kottak 2012; Bigando 2013). The exploration of sense-making processes is a way to explore more broadly the notion of place images at a neighbourhood scale (Tani 2001; Van Ham & Feijten 2008; Permentier 2009; Schoepfer, Zweifel & Paisiou 2011; Van Ham, Manley, Bailey, Simpson & MacLennan 2011). In particular, I investigated the emergence of residents' *neighbourhood images*, as well as the role of these images in their choices concerning housing (Oldrup & Carstensen 2012; Pinkster 2012; Van Eijk 2012).

Drawing on empirical research, this paper demonstrates how photography provides a valuable means of investigation, in particular during the data production stage of the research process. Notably, both the practices of taking pictures and of looking at them (Sturken & Cartwright 2001; Rose 2011), as well as the pictures themselves as visual items enhance reflexion, communication and reflexivity for the participants to the research. Photographs' visual dimension and their aptitude of capturing the qualitative dimension of urban space allowed an in depth expression and exchange of ideas concerning space (Bigando 2013; Lombard 2013: 24). Playing a role of thinking tools, pictures appeared to be particularly beneficial for opening up spaces of negotiations in situations involving a group of persons – as for example family members¹. Photography worked as a way to encourage interview talk, playing a role of visual catalysts (Rose 2011: 239), in particular by triggering emotions and memories (Loeffler 2005; Rose 2011: 240; Sampson & Gifford 2010; Oh 2012). These dimensions appeared to be particularly relevant in the context of an investigation of “ordinary” peoples' sense making of everyday space (Lefebvre 1980; Certeau, Giard & Mayol 1990; Holloway & Hubbard 2000; Thrift 2008; Rose 2011; Bigando 2013) and more broadly of the emergence and negotiation of their neighbourhood images.

In what follows I first clarify my approach towards the concept of neighbourhood image and expound on the implications of this definition on the methodological approach. Through this, I outline photography's potential for research on families' neighbourhood images, perceptions and practices of their daily-lived environment. Then, I provide details of the case study with nine families living in different neighbourhoods in Geneva and present

¹ For a discussion about research with groups: Hopkins 2007, Kaufmann 2010.

the three-stage method composed of a preliminary interview, a photo-walk combined with auto-photography, and a photo-elicitation interview. Linking back to previous research using pictures, I further show how photography, as a research tool and practice, can be incorporated into the methodological approach to explore neighbourhood images. Drawing on the results of my empirical research, the benefits and limits of photography in the methodological approach are discussed. Finally, the paper concludes by highlighting some broader contributions of this research to the debate in the field of visual methodology.

The elusiveness of neighbourhood images of families living in Geneva

This research investigates the question of how families², living in the city of Geneva, Switzerland, characterise their daily-lived neighbourhood. How do their *neighbourhood images* emerge in everyday life and mundane practices, and how do they impact on opinions and choices concerning housing (Oldrup & Carstensen 2012; Pinkster 2012; Van Eijk 2012)?

Place images are complex settings composed of multiple elements that are associated to a particular place, such as the built and natural environments, atmospheres, profile of inhabitants, as well as the activities and events that take place there. These elements can be related to the perception and sensation of place, to the stories about the place, to its history, to hearsay conveyed by media or acquaintances, or to so-called “common knowledge”. Even if there are some constants and fixed aspects of images of certain neighbourhoods, there is never just one image of a place, but rather a mix of overlapping, fractured, changing, or even contradictory images. Thus, place images can be considered as dynamic processes, where a multiplicity of components – such as discourses, knowledge, beliefs, materials and feelings – are (consciously or subconsciously) connected in residents’ minds and practices. Working with families, understood as a specific group composed of several persons, makes it possible to look at the emergence of neighbourhood images “in vivo”. In other words, negotiations of different ways of making sense of space within a group, as well as different ways of communicating the results of the negotiations to the researcher could be observed.

I conceptualise neighbourhood images (Tani 2001; Permentier, Van Ham & Bolt 2007, 2008; Permentier 2009) in an assemblage perspective (Deleuze & Guattari 2004; DeLanda 2006). Doing that implies to consider them as multiple, elusive and performative (Schoepfer, Zweifel & Paisiou 2011; Schoepfer & Paisiou 2014, Crot 2014). Neighbourhood images emerge in the mind of city inhabitants through their actions and practices. Nevertheless they are also inputs, which, in turn, influence these actions and practices. The images residents have, regarding the various neighbourhoods in their city, help to inform their everyday activities (Lynch 1960; Gould & White 1974; Kitchen & Blades 2002) in particular aspirations and decisions concerning the question of housing (Wacquant 1997; Permentier, Van Ham & Bolt 2007, 2008). The presence of a non grown-up in the household has specific implications on lifestyle, on the assessment of residential neighbourhoods, as well as on choices related to housing (Bonvalet & Lelièvre 2012). In fact, it triggers specific needs and wishes concerning

² Among a far more complex debate of the notion of family, I use here a simple definition of households, characterised by kinship between the members and the presence of at least one person aged from 0 to 16 (for a review of the debate concerning the definition see e.i. Moloney, Weston, Qu and Hayes 2012).

the household's residential choice, in particular concerning the immediate environment. For example, the presence of green spaces, quietness, good neighbourly relations, as well as to those aspects favouring the children's interests, such as proximity of the school, secure public parks and spaces, and public transport (Rérat, Piguet, Besson & Söderström 2008; Pattaroni, Thomas, Kaufmann & Ortelli 2009). Investigating the emergence of families' neighbourhood images, by identifying and understanding the aspects that matter to them and to which they pay attention, provides useful knowledge about how to produce high quality urban spaces for this type of household.

In the sixties, place images from a residents' perspective used to be investigated mainly through mental maps as a methodological tool, because they were understood merely as a product of the subjective perception of an individual observer (Lynch 1971; Gould & White 1974; Downs & Stea 2011; Kitchin & Blades 2002; Weichhart 2006). In the eighties, various critics to this approach (Golledge 2008) led a shift towards the idea of place images as socially produced representations of space, with a strong collective dimension of 'reputation' of that place. This also involved a shift on the methodological level, favouring the use of surveys and semi-structured interviews (Tani 2001; Permentier 2009). More recent works on place images go beyond the distinction between the subjective and the collectively produced in the constitution of the representation of a place. Highlighting that some characteristics of place image are sometimes as much linked to the place itself as to the psycho-social characteristics of the person or group who evaluate it, these studies favour the analysis of the material world and residents' practices in order to improve the understanding of the phenomenon. This increasing awareness of the importance of material and everyday life (Brekhus 2000) paves the way for a more ethnographic-oriented approach, which valorises the material, the visual, and the sensitive (Thomas 1983; Crang 2003; Lorimer 2010; Rose 2011; Garrett 2013). Therefore, on a methodological level there is a claim for an "...urgent need to supplement humanist methods that rely on generating talk and text, with experimental practices that amplify other sensory, bodily and affective registers and extend the company and modality of what constitutes a research subject" (Whatmore 2006: 606–607).

The use of photography appears to be particularly suiting for this kind of approaches (Alfonso, Kurti & Pink 2004), allowing the conjunct exploration of individual and collective aspects of place images, through the idea of an image being an assemblage of multiple and diverse features such as materials, discourses and semiotics. As evoked before, place images are elusive and changing, and thus hard to grasp. Hence, one major methodological difficulty is that, by asking participants only direct questions about their neighbourhood images (such as: "what is the image of neighbourhood xyz?"), there is a risk of obtaining mainly images in terms of clichés. In order to overcome this obstacle, and to get a more nuanced and personal view on neighbourhood images, an ethnography-inspired method based on photography, was set up for this research. Among the multiple ways of using photography in social sciences³, this specific research setting relied on auto-photography during photo-walks as well as on photo-elicitation interviews. The different steps of the method, as I show in details in the next part, gave the participants a voice to express their view that was simultaneously visual and verbal, and that also allowed experimentation with a more sensitive dimension of

³ For an overview, see: Rose 2011; Margolis & Pauwels 2011.

experimenting daily-lived space. In a way, this method represents a kind of laboratory set-up to observe how the participants' neighbourhood images emerged and are negotiated, out of their pictures and dialogues.

A three-step “neighbourhood images observation lab” based on auto-photo-walks and photo-elicitation interviews

In the frame of the earlier mentioned reflections, and drawing in particular on Lynn Blinn and Amanda Harrist (1991), I set up a three-steps method to work specifically in participation with families living in different central neighbourhoods of the city of Geneva, in order to learn about their neighbourhood images. Nine families have been selected as participants in order to present a diversity of cases, according to various features. These comprise the household composition, the age and number of children, the socio-professional profile of the parents, and the profile of their residential neighbourhoods in regard to income levels⁴. Therefore, the selection included families with single parents or couples having different professions and income levels, with one to three children, and with at least one child aged corresponding to different school stages (pre-primary school, primary school, secondary school). The method included a preliminary qualitative interview, an auto-photography walk in the residential neighbourhood, and a photo-elicitation interview.

Step one. A first encounter of the researcher and the family: discussion of the basics

During the first interview that took place at the participants' home, a substantial amount of time was used to explain and discuss the purpose of the research as well as their upcoming tasks in regard to the next steps of our collaboration. This stage of explaining how we were going to work together was particularly important with households that included children who were already able to participate (from about three years old). I explained the research to them in simpler terms and answered any questions they wanted to ask. Equally important was my own integration, as a complete stranger at the beginning of the study, into a group composed of united members⁵. Generating an atmosphere of confidence and trustworthiness enabled them to feel at ease to share their personal opinions, feelings, everyday experiences, and stories. During this first encounter, we went over some questions related to their residential life, in particular in regard to places where they used to live before and to how they looked for and ultimately chose their current home. Moreover, we discussed questions relating to their daily life, such as their specific ways of considering their neighbourhood, the aspects they liked or disliked about their living space, as well as their residential preferences in relation to the other residential areas within the city. This first discussion worked thus at the same time as a semi-structured interview aiming at exploring

⁴The statistics office from the canton of Geneva defined profiles in regard to households and incomes in the document “Un portrait des communes du canton et des quartiers de la ville de Genève” (OCSTAT 2008).

⁵Burgess, Limb and Harrison (1988) make a difference between “once-only groups” and “in-depth small groups”, the later referring to groups, which often meet on numerous occasions and thus already have connection.

the topic of neighbourhood images and residential life, as well as an important initial step of our collaboration. In particular, discussing families' everyday life and practices of the neighbourhood aimed at preparing the photo-walk, by raising their awareness about mundane issues. This first exchange could thus feed into what Eva Bigando (2013) names the "pre-photographic thinking", referring to the stage prior to the taking of pictures. The question "which pictures do we want to take?", which is underlying the intention of taking picture, encourages participants to adopt a reflexive position. This state of mind helps participants to think about their ordinary – sometimes a priori trivial – stories and topics, which are actually central in the understanding of place images.

Step two. The family's mission: a reflexive walk through their neighbourhood with a camera

During the week following the first interview, the families completed a photo-walk combined with auto-photography. Their mission was to go all together for a walk with a camera, in order to take between four and six pictures, which they felt best characterised their neighbourhood. They went by themselves, according to an itinerary that they were free to choose both in terms of distances and time. The idea behind the procedure was thereby to convey their "neighbourhood images" to the researcher.

Previous studies based on walk-along (Latham 2003; Rose, Degen & Basdas 2010; Degen & Rose 2012), sometimes alternatively named go-along (Kusenbach 2003; Carpiano 2009), revealed advantages of using a method that combines walks and the taking of pictures that appeared to be likewise beneficial for a study concerning place images (Carpiano 2009). In particular, walking has been described as a sensitive and bodily experience of space (Degen & Rose 2012). The participants' perception and practice of space is therefore influenced by what they see, smell, hear, touch and feel. Through their specific task of taking pictures during their walk, in the frame of a reflection about their everyday lived neighbourhood, the participants were encouraged to pay attention to their senses, especially of their visual sense (Piette 1992; Lelli 2003). Hence, walking encourages participants to talk about otherwise unnoticed and mundane dimensions and patterns of personal and social life (Leon De & Cohen 2005), as well as spontaneous encounters. The generated data has been described as profoundly informed by the (built) environment and the landscapes in which the walks take place (Evans & Jones 2011). Discussing the idea of a sensitive approach of space, Paul Harrison (2000) shows further how thought emerges out of the unthought, through ephemeral moments of feeling as sense.

Unlike in the previously mentioned studies (Kusenbach 2003; Latham 2003; Carpiano 2009; Rose, Degen & Basdas 2010; Degen & Rose 2012), the walks in this case were not based on a recorded walking interview in participation with the researcher. Even if this way of proceeding has valuable advantages such as the possibility for the researcher to ask questions directly and to observe the participants during the walk (Degen & Rose 2012), I chose to not accompany them for the walk. The reason is that I wanted the participants to create their own story, without the researcher as a guide or an observer of their discussions and negotiations. Along these lines, with the idea of leaving participants as free as possible, I gave them little instructions about the way of proceeding, except for the directive to take a defined, small

amount of pictures. This criterion aimed, besides the time issues, at creating a starting point for negotiations. As a result, the family members were forced to decide together on an agreed selection of self-taken pictures, or on their “shared neighbourhood image”, which they wanted to communicate. This negotiation involved obviously also disagreements about the selection of certain pictures, which could further be discussed during the elicitation interview. Undeniably, having a small number of pictures allowed for a more in-depth discussion of each picture as well as more time for a discussion about all the pictures together.

Consequently, in this process of taking pictures and combining them, the families used photographs as visual supports to show and further tell their story of how they viewed or described their neighbourhood. In previous research, auto-photography – or “autodriving photography” (Clark 1999) and “reflexive photography” (Harrington & Lindy 1999) – has shown to offer rich potential to explore participants’ perceptual observations of place (Wang & Burris 1997; Loopmans, Cowell & Oosterlynck 2012). Beside the advantages of giving the participants a sensitive experience of place when they go on site to take the pictures, auto-photography is also a way of expressing and communicating thoughts and opinions through the visual qualities of the picture. This alternative description method allows thus, compared to more conventional verbal communication, for visual expression. Participants can thereby represent their community, through a specific photographic technique. Along these lines, auto-photography has been described as “a powerful heuristic tool that can enhance understanding in new and nuanced ways” (Johnsen, May & Cloke 2008: 205). In this case, voice is given to a group of residents, opening a space for exchange and negotiation, and promoting critical dialogues. Irrefutably, some limits of the method have also been highlighted, such as the unequal ability of using the techniques of photography (such as the framing of the content, the position of the photographer in space to take the picture) among different participants groups (Lombard 2013). However, combining auto-photography with subsequent interviews, as it was the case here, allows participants to express the eventual difficulties they might have faced.

The families also wrote a short vignette about each picture they took: giving them a title, an explanation of the choice, and a description of the place where the picture was taken. Moreover, they were encouraged to write down any further thoughts and ideas they had in this particular moment. This reflective stage is crucial for a method based on auto-photography as it guarantees a successful elicitation in the next step (Blinn & Harrist 1991: 189). The vignettes also give the participants time to think about their answers, to sum up the different thoughts and opinions of the family members, and to structure them in a specific way. In this process, the image the family wants to communicate of their neighbourhood can gain consistency (Guattari 1979). Although some researchers decide not to look at the collected material before the photo-elicitation interview, in order to let themselves being surprised and react spontaneously to it (e.i. Bigando 2013), I asked the participants to send it to me. As a result, the discussion could be based on printed material, and I was able to formulate interview-specific questions to guide the subsequent stage.

Step three. A second encounter of the researcher and the family: re-opening the negotiations through photographs

The second interview began with the families sharing their story of the photo-walk. They explained the reasons for choosing their particular itinerary, the used procedure for taking the pictures, as well as the negotiation process for selecting the pictures for their “portfolio”. Then, they were asked to successively consider their photographs in the frame of a photo-elicitation interview. Thus, the participants explained the main idea, in relation to their neighbourhood image, they wanted to highlight through each photograph. Thereby, they referred to both the practice of photography during the walk (how and where they took the pictures) as well as to the visual content of the photographs themselves. Basically, similar questions as the ones from the vignette were posed, but the discussion enabled the investigation to go much deeper, by way of follow-up questions, narratives and stories. Simultaneously, these elicitation interviews give the participants the opportunity to explain and discuss their own choices. This way, their voice is untainted by the researcher’s subjective interpretations of their pictures. In this sense, photographs can have an empowering effect (Harper 1987; Hurworth 2003; Van Auken, Frisvoll & Stewart 2010; Tolia-Kelly 2011) because the participants retain authorship over the photographs they took and their interpretation. Consequently, the leadership role during the interview, which too often tends to be taken over by the researcher, is reassigned.

During elicitation interviews, photographs usually play the role of a visual catalyst in encouraging the interviewee to talk (Rose 2011: 239). Given their ability to activate (spatial) memory (Loeffler 2005; Rose 2011: 240), pictures have been recognized to help to improve interviewees’ capacity to think about space and verbalise their own experiences and perspectives (Van Auken, Frisvoll, Stewart 2010). Photographs also provide visual resources for the researcher and can be used to prompt for narratives of more emotional reflections (Buckingham 2009; Sampson & Gifford 2010: 118). In this sense, the dialogue and the pictures are working together in this type of interview. Photography is therefore not only used to illustrate some parts of the research visually, but is actively employed in the production of data. Building on John Berger’s idea (1972: 9) that we never just look at something without also considering its relation to other things and to ourselves, Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright (2001) address the question of the practice of looking at pictures (Sturken & Cartwright 2001; Tolia-Kelly 2011; Rose & Tolia-Kelly 2012). They state that pictures embody ways of seeing. Consequently, it is important to consider the question of what emerges from these relations and actions of looking. This means that, when using pictures, the researcher should consider the context in which participants look at them, and should take into account their social and cultural background, lifestyle and identity. As a result, when intervening in an interview, photographs have their own agency (Pinney 2004) and can represent multiple things at the same time. Beyond the visual or material qualities they can show, they can also be used as a way to remember an experience or social relationships (Stedman, Beckley & Ambard 2005). Photographs thus are material objects that are produced in a specific context, which mediates the world. They work as agents in action, rather than only as representations of the world (Crang 2003, Thrift 2008; Crouch 2010; Rose 2011). Gillian Rose (2011: 13) sums this up by advising to consider three sites in which the meanings of images are made: the site (or context) of production of the image, the site of the

image itself, and the site where it is seen by different audiences.

While discussing the pictures sequentially, the participants arranged them on the table and it could be observed that they automatically made some connections between them. These links were sometimes made spontaneously and sometimes relying on ideas they already had during the photo-walk and their previous discussions. The photo-elicitation hence gave the participants another chance to re-discuss and re-negotiate ideas and points of views that had been tackled during the auto-photography. Re-addressing a discussion that already took place previously opens up new channels to further challenge participants' assumptions, and to revisit and reconsider the neighbourhood image they wanted to communicate. The pictures, as Douglas Harper (2002: 23) has described before, constitutes a platform where the interlocutors tend to find common ground. When all the pictures have been placed on the table, the participants were explicitly asked to comment and reflect upon this collection as a whole. In particular, they were asked to explain which pictures they would eventually add or change after having discussed the issue of neighbourhood image during the whole collaboration process. Thereby, the participants had the opportunity to rethink critically their own selection of images. Moreover, these moments of explicit reassessment encouraged each individual to take a step back from the family's "collective image", and to share personal, sometimes divergent opinions. Thus, even if I wanted the discussion to generally follow a "natural" flow, I still wanted that all family members had a chance to raise their voice, and these moments were a support for balancing speaking turns.

Finally, at the end of the interview, the families were asked to give feedback about our collaboration. In particular, we talked about the role of photography in the collaboration process; that is, the benefits and limitations when thinking about everyday space in a more conscious manner than one is accustomed to. This reflexive discussion was designed to get their feedbacks on their experience, as a concluding way to look back on our collaboration.

How and why did photography contribute in developing an efficient method for grasping neighbourhood images?

After a detailed description of the method I used in the research, I focus in this part on the question of how and why photography contributed in making valuable a method designed specifically for grasping neighbourhood images. The research highlighted three main points: first, working with photography allowed the participants to "think visually" by inviting them to pay attention to the materiality of the world. Second, photography favoured communication among the group, by representing a platform of interaction. And third, photography enabled the participants to engage with the research process in a reflexive way. Thereby, the broad notion of photography refers, depending on the circumstances, to either the practice of taking pictures, to the objects themselves, or to the practice of looking at them (Sturken & Cartwright 2001). In these different definitions, which involve considering the three sites of the image as described by Gillian Rose (2011: 13), two fundamental qualities of photography, namely its visual and performative qualities, were mobilised in different ways. By means of illustrations from the fieldwork, I aim to discuss the benefits and limitations of photography in the data production stage of the research process.

“Thinking visually”: working with photography to look at the materiality of the world

Photography possesses two kinds of visual qualities. On the one hand, there is the visual information that the picture itself carries. On the other, the research process connected to it encourages participants to pay attention to the physical environment and the materiality of the world that occurs when taking a picture (Rose 2011). Families were thus able to capture the qualitative dimension of urban space (Lombard 2013: 24), in particular what Alan Latham (2003) calls “texture”. This notion refers to the elusive qualities that define the sense of place, and that are difficult to convey by using words only. Through their pictures, participants could invite the researcher to imagine the places they wanted to talk about. They could show the agency or the arrangement of a vast range of elements – including the built and the natural environment, the sceneries, the spatial settings such as streets, parks and squares, and their architecture, colours and appearance, or the objects such as cars, bodies, street furniture and signs. Taking pictures with the intention of presenting them to an interlocutor allowed participants to elucidate the relations between the materiality of the places they wanted to demonstrate and the meaning that they attach to them.



Figure 1: Terrasse chez Marie (family A)

“There are many terraces in the neighbourhood, but ***’s terrace is particularly enjoyable. The arrival of her and her café brought people together. She has done a lot for the neighbourhood. It is a place that brings positivity and life to the neighbourhood. It is a meeting point where people take time to talk. There is a reflection about life that I like among people; It concerns our lifestyle, how we live, what we do, how

we like to live, about ecology, and quality of life. When we talk with people we ask ourselves questions about how to raise our children; maybe about not working 100% of the time but rather spending time with them instead. Thus, now there is a really great neighbourhood life in Les Grottes. With this atmosphere, people run their neighbourhood, there is cohesion between them, they feel part of the organisation, and they are heard”.

As an example, in figure 1, family A wanted to illustrate the atmosphere of the street in which they live. Particularly relevant to this was the terrace of the café they like, which they decided to capture in one of their pictures. They were able to show how it is framed, decorated and how it occupies the street, creating a shared space between pedestrians and motorized vehicle users. They explained further that when this café opened some years ago, it brought a new vitality to the neighbourhood by favouring contacts and communication among the neighbours, as well as between the local residents and other guests of the café. For the family, the owner and the way she got involved in the neighbourhood initiated this dynamism and dialogue. The issue of reaching a compromised situation in the use of public space was particularly important for them, and this conciliatory attitude represented for them the typical attitude of residents in this specific neighbourhood.



Figure 2: *Jacuzzi* (family B)

“Recently, in the neighbourhood there is a trend to extend existing buildings by the construction of an additional floor. There are some very ordinary buildings, which suddenly become luxurious due to something being placed on the roof. In the picture you can see a splendid extension with two floors, a whirlpool and a sculpture. It’s funny to see such luxury in a working-class neighbourhood, because the

people who live in these new sections are on a different social level than those who occupy the rest of the neighbourhood. It is quite an odd phenomena happening in the neighbourhood. Thus, the children of the families living in the wealthy extensions go to school with my daughter. The cohabitation of two lifestyle types exist in *Les Paquis* and it is beneficial for everyone”.

Figure 2 is another example of the use of a picture to show visual and material aspects of the neighbourhood that opens up a discussion about urban space. Family B wanted to illustrate a recent trend that characterizes their neighbourhood, namely the extension of some existing buildings by the construction of an additional floor. They wanted to show how the newly built floors are blending into the surroundings, in the sense that even though they are barely visible, they still make a contrast with the existing built space (on figure 2, the white arrow and rectangle indicate the constructions they were discussing). During the elicitation interview, the family members explained that this phenomenon came with a change in the population composition of their working-class neighbourhood, by the arrival of wealthier people moving into these newly built parts of the building. This socio-demographic change was also linked to a change of atmosphere in the neighbourhood, influencing how they feel about the place. Therefore, a physical change of the neighbourhood, which refers to a material dimension of neighbourhood image, was tightly linked to a socio-spatial change.

These two examples show how a picture can encourage participants to engage in a particular way of thinking, using the visual-material dimension of the neighbourhood as an entry point to reflect upon further dimensions. These reflections help in understanding the way they make sense of a particular place. Thus, photography makes people do / say something and possesses therefore performative qualities. Both during the photo-walk and the elicitation, pictures involve performative functions in the sense of fostering interaction and triggering thinking processes through the respective practices of taking and looking at them (Sturken & Cartwright 2001; Tolia-Kelly 2011; Rose & Tolia-Kelly 2012).

During the photo-walk, the families were guided by the idea and the practice of taking pictures, which helped them in framing their reflection about their daily-lived space. Holding the camera in hand made them feel as if they were “on a mission”, and forced them to think about how they wanted to position themselves within a particular space, in order to convey a specific view. Thus, taking pictures during the photo-walk enabled participants to capture things and ideas visually, by producing a “visual memos” of the moment. In fact, the walk consisted of a sensitive experience of space that enables the interviewees to pay attention to their different senses: smell, sound, touch and a sense of feeling of the atmosphere. Therefore, they tried to capture these impressions through pictures, to remember the momentum and to report it during the second interview. Participants had already in mind part of the places they wanted to take a picture of before going for the walk, but they also took some pictures spontaneously, or as some termed it, “intuitively”. Hence, photography also enabled the participants to grasp unexpected encounters, events happening in the place, behaviours of people, or their own unexpected feelings that emerged during the walk.



Figure 3: voiture sur trottoir (family C)

“In the photograph you can see an expensive car parked on a sidewalk. On the one hand, it shows that people who live here are wealthy and on the other that they do not really care about others. It is impossible to walk along the sidewalk and you are forced onto the road. It is an attitude of wealthy people who have little respect for each other”.



Figure 4: les chantiers (family C)

“At the moment when my husband said he wanted to take a picture of some construction work I told him to hurry up as I would like to include the man holding hands with two children who were walking on the street instead of the sidewalk in the picture. I find that it shows the shambles and consequences of the construction work and how it forces a family to walk somewhere other than the sidewalk”.

For example family C took a picture of a car that was parked on a sidewalk (figure 3) in order to illustrate how this material object (the car), its appearance (an expensive brand) and the spatial arrangement (it was parked on the sidewalk), characterises the particular neighbourhood, because it revealed the type of behaviour from the people living there. Family C took also another picture of this type, namely, as figure 4 shows, of a man holding the hands of two children who are walking on the street instead of the sidewalk because of some construction work. Starting from this fact, the family explained different elements about the recent transformations in the neighbourhood. The mother of the family explained that in this particular case she had asked her husband, who was holding the camera, to hurry up to take the picture of the very precise moment when the man and the two children had to step on the road because of the obstructed sidewalk.

The participants explained that the intention of taking pictures helped them to pay attention to these mundane events that would otherwise remain unnoticed if they were not gathered by the mean of a visual support that can be looked at with “distance” subsequently.

This reveals that the practice of taking pictures worked as a thinking tool. However, the pictures themselves (as visual items) also had a performative effect during the elicitation interviews, by generating talk and spontaneous reactions. In particular, participants became aware of elements in the pictures that they had not seen before and could comment on these ideas directly in our dialog.



Figure 5: Rue de XX, notre entrée (family B)

Interviewer: “Oh, we can see a reflection of a building in the picture”.

Respondent: “Oh I just noticed it now you know! It is a student residential house, and it is nice to have it in the neighbourhood because student life means young people from different nationalities, who are quite calm because they are serious students. It is nice to have them here because they are aware of what happens in their neighbourhood, they are involved, they participate in the life of the neighbourhood and bring life to the place”.

For example, family D took a picture (figure 5) of the entrance of their house in order to emphasise the importance of their home. While looking at the photograph during the interview, they suddenly noticed that there was a reflection (mirror image) of the neighbouring house on the pictured glass door, which they had not seen at the moment they took the picture. Drawing on this surprising element that clearly fostered enthusiasm, the family started to explain that the mirrored building was a student residential house. For them, this place was essential in the neighbourhood, not because of the building as such, but

because of its residents, namely students. They explained that this type of population brings some life, action, and critical thinking into their neighbourhood, as well as a valuable mix of population to this neighbourhood generally defined as a working-class. By looking at the pictures, comparing and commenting on them, interviewees thus thought about elements that they would not have thought of otherwise and also discussed what lays outside of the frame or stays absent in the pictures.

Negotiating neighbourhood images: photography as a way to stimulate interactivity and communication

The method, with several moments of decision-making, negotiations, re-questioning and reflexive stages among the group, was framed to actively involve the participants in the research through an interactive, collaborative and in-depth process of thinking about place images. Therefore, the participants went through alternate phases of first trying to find an agreement about a (fairly) coherent neighbourhood image to communicate, and second of (re)questioning it, creating a movement of “closing down” and “opening up”. As a result, this encouraged the participants to go through an in-depth process of thinking. For example, when presenting the pictures as a whole, most of the families tried to show a coherent neighbourhood image, built up through different logics. Some families tried to create a portfolio, which presented the most diverse dimensions of the neighbourhood. Others, as family E in figure 6, decided to use a verb to describe a mundane action represented in each picture such as living, working, socialising, playing, going for a walk and resting. Others used the pictures to tell a specific story. This could for example be about them living as a family in their neighbourhood, or of the particular day when they made the photo-walk.



Figure 6: Portfolio of family E

At several moments of collaboration with the families, photography encouraged the dialogue between the different interlocutors in that they presented a common ground for discussion, or a reference point (Schwartz 1989) that the different interlocutors could look at and discuss together. This means that it triggered first the communication between the interviewees and the researcher, since the collaboration fell into the perspective of an exchange based on photographs. The pictures played therefore a guiding role in getting the participants involved. Second, photography also fostered the interactivity among the participants themselves, in particular during the photo-walk when they worked without the researcher. The families had to choose pictures together, negotiate which ones they wanted to select, and what they wanted to tell about their neighbourhood. For example, there was a disagreement about the selection of one particular picture between a mother and a daughter. Whereas the mother found the place represented on the picture awful and not important for her neighbourhood life, for the daughter it was an important socialising place in daily life. This showed that dialogue, divergent opinions, personal experience and meaning attached to places can be different, but cumulated in order to describe a fuller image of a place. Thus, neighbourhood images appeared as complex constellations of overlapping, often contradictory, but still compatible, facets.

Photographs structured the dialogue during the photo-elicitation interview, by the way of discussing one after the other, and finally all together. Every time a new picture was introduced into the discussion, a new aspect of neighbourhood images emerged alongside of it. It sometimes reinforced an image, and sometimes contradicted it. Looking, seeing and pointing out details on the picture, comparing, moving and arranging them, triggered dialogue. The pictures invited to ask for further explanations concerning specific elements shown within as well as outside the frame of the picture (e.g. “and what is situated behind this building?”). Having the items on the table also invited participants to move them around, positioning them differently to tell a story, or different stories according to the group members. In particular, they favoured the dialogue about temporality and emotions, two important dimensions of the daily life in a neighbourhood.

The discussion and confrontations of different viewpoints and opinions allowed the participants to realise differences between the images they have of their neighbourhoods and practices. In addition they enable them to re-question things that they were not used to reassess.

Reflexivity: working with photography to grasp personal images and to involve participants actively

Finally, the method encourages reflexivity (Holliday 2004; Rose 1997) and favours alternative ways of thinking about everyday life. The use of photography offered the families the opportunity to engage in the research in a collaborative way. The participants commented that reflecting on their everyday space and practices was not an easy exercise. In particular, they sometimes felt insecure about how to talk about their daily life. In other words, they were wondering how to find the interesting stories to tell and which elements to start with. Participants mainly evoked these doubts during the first interview because they considered the stories about their daily life as being uninteresting and ordinary. Using photographs this

way reveals the mundane, and helps to elucidate what people either take for granted or what seems unquestionable to them (Bogdan & Biklen 2007). For example, one family, composed of a mother, father and a three year old child, explained in the first interview that the image of their neighbourhood corresponds to a “trendy hipster neighbourhood with a lot of bars, boutiques and high [sic] educated young urban professionals without kids”. However, during the second interview, they wanted to show a completely different image of the neighbourhood with a main focus on playgrounds for children and parks, as well as schools, trying to give it some coherence. Therefore, the stage of choosing pictures highlighted another facet of this very same place.

Photographs therefore presented participants with a way to think differently and to have a new look on their everyday space, and the families acknowledged the richness of the method. Photography was described as being an accessible, familiar, and attractive tool, especially for groups that include children. In particular, the limited number of pictures they had to take helped them to structure their thoughts and to have a general reflection. This came up as a surprising element since at the first interview some participants seemed frustrated about the amount of pictures they were supposed to take, as they considered it as being too small. During the second interview however they realised how much one can say about even such a small number. In the end, all the interviewed families said something positive about the learning process and the knowledge gained from this experience. “Our participation in your research made us realise once again that the neighbourhood is still so important for us, and that we really like it. We rediscovered that, and we would not want to change it for anything in the world” (interview with family F).

The used method reveals two practices of inhabitants: the practice of their neighbourhood and the social practice of photography (Crang 1997). The later point allows considering photography as merely a practice forming part of the world, than as a representation that reflects it. By doing the photo-walk, interviewees created a new memory among the group (family), which turned out to be a reflexive and shared experience of their daily-lived space, reflecting everyday practices. During the photo-elicitation, the photographs played a role of catalyst and gave access to various spaces of the past and the possible. This refers to memories coming from the walk, to the everyday life, to what can be called the deep past, or from virtual possible. The photographs enabled to capture visual aspects of the neighbourhood image, to bring to light a collective way of seeing, experimenting, and perceiving the neighbourhood.

Conclusion

This paper presents and discusses the use of a specific methodological approach based on photography. The proposed method consists of three steps: a preliminary qualitative interview, an auto-photography walk in the residential neighbourhood, and a photo-elicitation, which was elaborated in order to generate a better understanding of families' neighbourhood images. The use of photography answers to a call for new methods developed to investigate people's sense making of everyday space (Thomas 1983; Crang 2003; Whatmore 2006; Rose 2011; Lorimer 2010; Garrett 2013) in the context of increasing valorisation of material and everyday life within social sciences (Brekhus 2000).

The presented method, and the way photography was used in this context, does entail some biases, which require careful consideration. In particular, from pictures taken by families a strong tendency to describe positive aspects of the neighbourhood could be observed, while negative ones were excluded. This bias was verbalised by one participant who made a similar reflection on their own pictures, saying that it would have been difficult to take pictures of something they really disliked – as for example trash on the floor – even if this would have been relevant in the context of talking about what characterises their neighbourhood. Hence in order to avoid this bias, it is crucial to advice participants prior to the photo-walk to equally pay attention to what they appreciate less. Alternatively, these effects can be balanced by asking them the question during the elicitation interview. The mentioned difficulty of representing negative sides is directly related to another issue, which concerns the self-image. Presenting self-taken pictures to communicate, dovetails with the question of how a person wants to present her/himself; and is another bias to be aware of when using the proposed method. Finally, there is also a material bias, meaning that thinking about places through pictures makes participants focus on materiality or “frogs’ eyes view”, i.e., a horizontal view of the city. The proposed method is a fair, however not the only approach, to the study of place images that can be contrasted or combined with an orthogonal “birds’ eyes view” of the city shown by maps (Schoepfer & Rogers 2014).

The benefits of the method, with regards to my aim of understanding neighbourhood images of families living in the city of Geneva, can be summed up as follows. First, I could observe that (the act of) “showing” is important when participants explain how they feel about their everyday space. Pictures enable to illustrate physical – built or natural – environment, objects, settings, or disposition. Visuality appeared to be a valuable entry point to reveal further dimensions of place images, such as social, historical, functional, or factual aspects. Furthermore, being physical objects, photographs drive the interview by allowing interviewees to grab, arrange and structure them in different ways. The method allows highlighting the importance of these aspects concerning images residents have of their daily space. During the photo-walk, the practice of taking pictures encouraged the participants to have a sensitive experience of space. This means that they could use photographs to capture and fix moments, events, or happenings, which characterize their neighbourhood for them. The photos were additionally used in order to illustrate the participants’ descriptions during the interviews. As mentioned earlier, pictures stimulate memory and enable to navigate through different temporalities. Acting as visual catalysts or thinking tools, they favoured reflexion, communication and reflexivity among family members. In particular, the material dimension of place images could be addressed through the visibility of photographs while thinking through photographs during a walk encouraged participants to pay attention to the sensitive dimension. Photographs proved to have potential for revealing the sensitivity a local resident shows towards his everyday neighbourhood. Thus, they helped to understand relationships between places and inhabitants’ emotions and memories. Many families took pictures in order to show very specific and personal aspects of their lives, such as the place where their parents fell in love, or the place where the first child was born. Pictures worked as support for storytelling, through a double – visual and verbal – elicitation. Moreover, the theory used to conceptualise neighbourhood images lines up with the presented method, shedding light on dimensions of neighbourhood images that are elusive and emotional.

Finally, the main strength of the presented method is probably the way it was set up. Combining the different qualities of photography in a particular way made it possible to observe how images emerge from certain moments of the procedure and how they are negotiated among research participants.

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Photoethnography of the urban space, or how to describe the urban world beyond words: presentation of a multimedia essay

Abstract

In our research project, entitled “At the heart of the city: analysing the pulse of the Plaça de Catalunya in Barcelona” and financed by the Inventory of Ethnological Heritage of Catalonia (IPEC), which belongs to the Department of Culture of the Catalan government, the question of images and sounds was central. After our fieldwork, the question of how to present our work arose; we did not want to do it through text alone. The idea then was gradually born of the multimedia format presented here, which is part of a more general reflection on the attention to be paid to sounds and images for the analysis and understanding of contemporary urban life.

Keywords

Urban ethnography, Ethnographic writing, Multimedia, Public space, Barcelona

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How can we grasp a public space from visual or sound data? What are the benefits of such a perspective in comparison with other approaches? How can images dialogue with words and sounds, without these different registers repeating one another? These questions, through which we consider images and sounds no longer as simple illustrations of a discourse but as research tools and means of dissemination, raise writing issues. We understand writing as the presentation of a reflection which is not only based on words but which could also use light¹ and sound.

The ethnographer is first and foremost a scribe, as Yves Winkin (1996:103) reminds us, following the etymology of the word, and this task of writing (which takes place in several stages during the fieldwork and the analysis) may be materialized in several ways: by writing texts, of course, but also through sketches, maps, drawings, and by organizing sequences of photos together with sounds. When we “write” – with letters and symbols, light, figures, sounds, etc. – we conceptualize, we give a shape to our thought. For a long time, description in anthropology was regarded solely as a problem of literary quality: a text was either well or badly written (Laplantine, 1996). But since Clifford Geertz’s reflections, with his idea of ethnographic “thick description” (1973),² the impact of the researcher on his own research and its influence on the results have been well known. Therefore, instead of talking of data “collection” techniques, I would rather refer to the “production” of data in order to show that the latter are a construction, i.e. produced throughout the fieldwork according to the research questions rather than “collected” as if they were raw material. So everything is there to be constructed, including the way we look at things. I shall present here how we constructed a “photographic” gaze on public space, one which also takes into account the sounds of this space.³

The gazes we bring to bear on the city

“bring objects to life, which formal languages will then organize. These gazes result from postures, ways of positioning and moving the body in space, positions taken within the city. The ways we do or not see things, the ways in which research objects are constructed, depend on the observer’s posture, the places he occupies in the social space and how he places himself within it. Objective knowledge, which postulates the externality of the observer and of the object perceived, is no exception to this rule: the

¹ This raises the much debated question of whether we can think through images. This text contributes to the debate, but without entering into all its issues, since this would go beyond my present intention. It is however pertinent to mention on the one hand the very thought-provoking collective work edited by Etienne Samain (2012), which postulates that images carry thoughts and as such make us think; and on the other hand, the article by Andrés Davila (2011), which encourages one to focus on the verbal-visual texts of Lewis W. Hine in order to write sociological texts combining words and images.

² The idea is to view facts by combining the perspectives of the ethnographer, of the main interlocutors and of those with whom we live and with whom we study, while paying attention to the discourses of other disciplines (sociology, psychology, history, political sciences, architecture, town planning, etc.).

³ Although the purpose of this paper is not to discuss the notion of public space, I wish to mention the polemical aspect of this term (since, although they are in principle accessible to all, public spaces are not always so in practice), which leads me to prefer the term “urban space” to “public space”.

painter is inside the painting, the gaze at the city is also a gaze within the city” (Topalov, 1996: 2).

Observation thus presupposes having a purpose and intentions; and, at the meeting point of the visible and the invisible, the eyes of the onlooker make things exist (Havelange, 1998).⁴ “Knowing how to observe,” “knowing how to be with others” and “knowing how to write” are thus the three skills required by any ethnography (Winkin, 1996: 103). The ethnographer has to learn how to look at things, how to listen, and also how to use the writing techniques available in this early 21st century in order to report his work as effectively as possible.

The ideas set out below are based on a research project conducted with María Isabel Tovar on the dynamics of the Plaça de Catalunya in Barcelona.⁵ They were discussed and enriched during teaching experiments at the National School of Architecture in Versailles⁶ and in the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the Autonomous University of Barcelona:⁷ there I invited my students to think about images as tools of research and analysis as well as means of dissemination.

Although I am unable to present here the research on the Plaça de Catalunya in its entirety,⁸ I shall first address the contributions of an approach based on photographs and sound recordings to the understanding of how an urban space operates. We wanted to reveal the different in which the central square of Barcelona is used and socially constructed, paying particular attention to the social meanings of interactions and displacements. When she investigated the square in 2000 and 2001, the researcher Gabriela de la Peña (2003) emphasized the role of the vantage points for reconstructing this space and suggested an analysis based on visibility *versus* accessibility axes; We found this view interesting and endeavoured to make a more in-depth study by exploring how the eye can grasp reality and the games of visibility at play as well as the issues of visibility or invisibility.

⁴ For more detail on the way we approach the links between knowing and seeing, see Monnet, 2010.

⁵ Entitled “Al cor de la ciutat: anàlisi dels bategs de la Plaça de Catalunya a Barcelona” (At the heart of the city: analysing the pulse of the Plaça de Catalunya in Barcelona), this research was financed in 2005 by the Inventory of Ethnological Heritage of Catalonia (IPEC) and the Department of Culture of the Catalan government. The following year, we were granted a second research aid from the Catalan Institute of Anthropology (ICA) to create a model of a website, which can be accessed on the site http://www.contraplano.org/cd-rom_plcatalunya_2011/intro.html

⁶ Among other things, the Master’s seminar entitled “Décrire l’espace habité” (Describing inhabited space) (2009-2010) run with my colleague Evelyne Volpe, to whom I wish to pay tribute here; and the Master’s first year research initiation workshop entitled: “hotoethnography of public space) (2010-2011).

⁷ With the Master’s courses taught in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 on the uses of photography in ethnographic writing.

⁸ The research paper, available from the IPEC, has never been published in its entirety but, for a brief introduction to it, please refer to Monnet and Tovar, 2006 and for examples of developments, the 3rd essay by Monnet, 2007 and the writings of 2009.

In a second stage, I shall present the reflection process which led us to elaborate a multimedia writing to disseminate our research as well as the keys for reading it.

Images and sounds allowing attentive observation of the smallest details of daily life

When we observe the hubbub and agitation of the city, we are overwhelmed with information. Taking photographs and capturing sounds are helpful in outlining phenomena as they freeze instants in a constant to-and-fro and record clues which may not always be decipherable immediately, but gradually become clearer, as in the visual archaeology suggested by Luiz Eduardo Robinson Achutti in “Madame Émile est partie” (2004: 16-31).⁹

On the other hand, taking photos or recording sounds undoubtedly establishes us as observers of a place (Maresca and Meyer, 2013: 30) and makes it easier to defamiliarize an everyday and habitual context like a square which one may frequently walk through mechanically, without noticing. Capturing images and sounds assists this decentring process, provides the necessary distancing required by the ethnographic gaze to see and hear better what goes on before our eyes. For, as Augoyard (2001: 127) emphasizes, the researcher in an urban context is generally “doubly hearing-impaired. He suffers from misunderstanding caused by a deafening racket; and from misunderstanding due to not listening properly. Sound only reaches him in excess or through silence.”

Sounds and images hence enable us to see the elements we cannot perceive immediately, so as to obtain “thicker” and more systematic observations. Moreover, photography and captured sounds enable us to observe and listen, in several stages, to certain things that we would not see or hear on the spur of the moment. As we were working on the Plaça de Catalunya, we would meet regularly to look at and comment upon the pictures taken by each of us.¹⁰ This enabled us to bring out certain regularities which we had overlooked during in-situ observation (recurrent phenomena, users of the square whom we could suddenly identify and see again on the following days, etc.).

Like Albert Piette (1996), we consider the “photographic click”¹¹ an ideal means to discover the smallest details of daily life and stimulate a “new way to look at social life” for a “better ‘rupture’ effect for the eyes than the film image”. That is because a photograph,

on its own or alongside other images with similar or contrasting features, can bring out something ‘remarkable’ (Moles, 1990), ‘cause a sudden illumination’¹² and give visual

⁹In this prelude to his manual on photoethnography, L.-E. Achutti portrays the former resident of the apartment that one of his acquaintances had just purchased. By photographing her personal belongings and furniture, which had not been moved after her death, and deciphering the clues she had left, he takes us into the life of this “French female factory worker who lived during a major part of the 20th century” (2004: 4).

¹⁰It should be mentioned that both of us were amateur photographers, but in most of those meetings, one or more professional photographers helped us comment on the images.

¹¹To which we added a “sound click”, as explained below.

¹²This is the *punctum* referred to by Roland Barthes (1980).

relevance to features not obvious to the naked eye for people in their daily interactions or for observers who no longer notice them (Piette, 1996: 150).

On the classification of the photos taken on the Plaça de Catalunya

Thus, for example, the photos of what we had designated as “entries into the square” drew our attention to the body postures which make it possible to distinguish groups clearly. We should explain in this regard that we were required by the IPEC (Inventory of Ethnological Heritage of Catalonia) to identify the content of the photos to be deposited in their archives. As neither of us both was born in the city of Barcelona and we are sensitive to identity issues,¹³ we declined to classify these people on criteria of supposed membership of groups (as we had not asked the people we photographed how they wished to be portrayed) and therefore did not interfere with the spectators’ interpretation in that respect. This posture gave rise to the following typology of human configurations according to the way they occupy the space: “empty space,” “individual” (single person), “small group”, designated in turn as a family group,¹⁴ couple (if there was visibly a close relationship between the two people), duo (when no sign of such relationship was perceptible), trio, etc., “compact group” (group of more than ten people who tended to perform a similar activity), and finally “flow,” when groups were impossible to distinguish.



Example of photo tagged “Duo” for the files of the IPEC, where the way bodies pose and are clustered under the same umbrella clearly delineates a unit of mutual acquaintance.

¹³ Gérard Althabe warned, more than 20 years ago, that “by staging social worlds in their works, whereby they emphasise ethnocultural singularity, ethnologists delineate the boundaries of their exclusion and thus contribute unwittingly to the exclusion process” (Althabe, 1992: 255). For a reflection on the perception of otherness in Spain and the importance of the choice of words used to describe migratory phenomena, see Santamaría, 2002 and 2008; and for a more specific reflection on the Catalan case and in connection with our field work on the Plaça de Catalunya, see Monnet, 2008.

¹⁴ While family links are often not readable in the public space, we place in this category the people who declared them the square, for example the common case of children addressing an adult as “mummy” or “daddy”.



Example of photo tagged “Couple” for the files of the IPEC, given the intimate relationship implied by the persons wrapping their arms around each other’s bodies.



Example of photo tagged “Family group” for the IPEC files with children posing accompanied by people who might plausibly be their grandparents. As for the photographer, in the background, his kinship with the people photographed was revealed to us when one of them called out: “Go for it, daddy, it’s OK! Quick!”



Example of photo tagged “Trio” for the IPEC files. Here, it was the position of the feet and arms of the three people in the centre of the image that made us understand that they “are walking together,” in contrast to the gazes and positionings of the other people sharing the space with them. The latter are looking or heading in other directions or are not walking in step with them (in the case of the woman strolling behind).

As we progressed in our work,¹⁵ by analysing the series of photos we had produced to capture the moments when the people entered the square, we realized that photography helped us understand some of our intuitions, when we established our typology of the different clusters present on the square. The convergence of a series of elements, such as the way of dressing, the gestures, the direction of the eyes, the spaces crossed, etc. makes it possible to underscore a certain staging in which a cluster can be unified and that makes it possible to define this cluster of people as a “small” or “large group,” but also the fact that they share a number of visible marks.



Examples of photos tagged “Entries into the square” for the files of the IPEC.

¹⁵ Not so much as a final phase, but rather during our research. On the working principle of the “pencil-camera” of Jean Rouch who “in full swing, by successive approximations” seeks to initiate a synthesis in situ, whereas the first editing provides a second reflective phase (Prédal, 1996: 36).

More generally, the processes of composition and framing enabled us to discern the “choreographic” qualities of the different clusters. Thus, compact groups, visible from afar, can only be grasped by using wide shots. Photography led us to reflect on the classifications used and the importance of the words selected to describe a situation that was observed. An individual may be perceived as a simple passer-by or be turned into a “character,” i.e. a characteristic user of the square, through a simple frontal shot, whereas otherwise he would have been defined by the abstract action of passing through. In the category “individual,” we therefore designated some persons as “performers”, when they put themselves on show in the square, or as “characters,” like the man in his sixties who regularly came to the square but who, every time we talked to him, presented himself with a different identity. The “characters” are thus people whom we could clearly identify on the basis of their activities on the site.



“Performers”

“I’ve got money! I’m rich! THANK YOU”



*"Man and woman gleaning"*¹⁶



A person putting on a show, then walking past people sitting on benches in the first row, asking them to join in.



"Man on his round"

A term borrowed from Gabriela de la Peña (2003) who coined the expression to describe the activity of some people on the square who spend their mornings or afternoons wandering in circles generally in front of the benches in the first or second row (to locate these spaces, see the map at p. 56)

¹⁶ Referring to Agnès Varda's film *The Gleaners and I*, 2000.



"Pigeon man," by analogy with "cat ladies"¹⁷



"Peeping Tom"

We use the term "peeping Tom" (*voyeur*) intentionally, instead of observer, since this person would come regularly to that place which slightly overlooks the square (see the map at the p. 56) to stare at the people lying on the lawns behind the bushes.

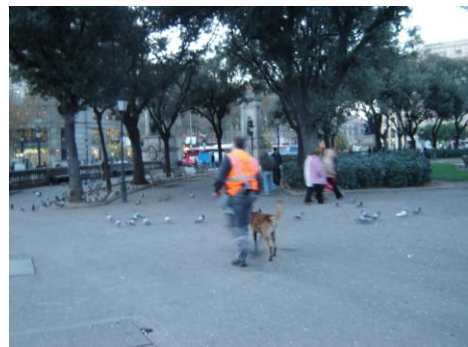
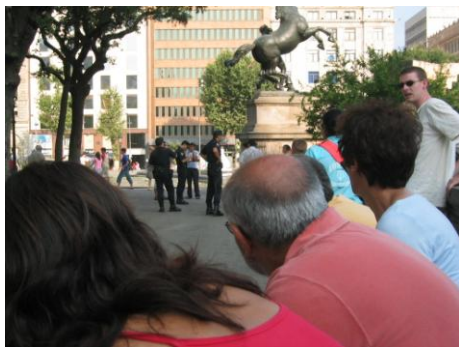
So the pictures taken are important but so too is the selection of the words then used to describe them, a theme which cannot be stressed enough, as pointed out by François

¹⁷ Yaël André has devoted a film to them, which is much more than an analysis and presentation of this human/cat relationship. In her film, *Chats errants: espaces temporaires d'inutilité* ("Stray cats: temporary spaces of uselessness," Belgium, 2007, 69 min), she conducts a very thought-provoking and inspired reflection on Georges Perec's work on space.

Laplantine, who remarks on “the lack of astonishment at the potentialities of language” (2009: 71) manifested by most researchers in the social and human sciences.¹⁸

On the ways of presenting oneself in public

The permanent or semi-permanent users of the square include “specialists,” i.e. practitioners hired and legitimated by the authorities to manage the activities performed on the square (the various police departments operating in Catalonia but also, depending on the events held on the square, private security services), its maintenance (water service, conservation of monuments, parks and gardens, etc.), to “clear” it (the refuse and sanitation service) so as to keep it “clean” and in compliance with the standards expected of a public space in Barcelona. It is not a difficult task to recognize these specialists. They are readily identified by the insignia they wear, their uniforms and/or the items linking them to the institutions that give them legitimacy: the City Hall and its different departments (Parks and Gardens, Water service, Conservation of Monuments, etc.), the Catalan government (Generalitat), the city, national or Catalan police (Mossos d’Esquadra).



Supervising the square

¹⁸ One of my leitmotifs when teaching is to insist on the words used giving an account of observations made in the public space. We need to remember that words and concepts are socio-historical constructs; they have a history and implications. Too often, we lose sight of the fact they are reductive because they fail to embrace the reality in its totality. Constructed categories are always viewpoints on something at a given time, like the net evoked by Claude Lévi-Strauss in *The Savage Mind*, with which one catches some of the real without being able to catch all of it. Classifying and creating categories are important and necessary processes, but they constantly need to be questioned and revised so that thought can develop and reflection can progress.

The distinctive signs conferring an identity through clothing and/or complements worn on the bodies present are not, however, specific to “official uniforms.” As we were observing the square and building our photographic register (especially when selecting and analysing the photos) the ways people dressed suddenly appeared as means of bodily territorialization of the space occupied or crossed in the square, a territorialization which thereby constituted it. Photography thus led us to reflect on these complex visual signs implicit to the different clothing styles that are juxtaposed on the square.

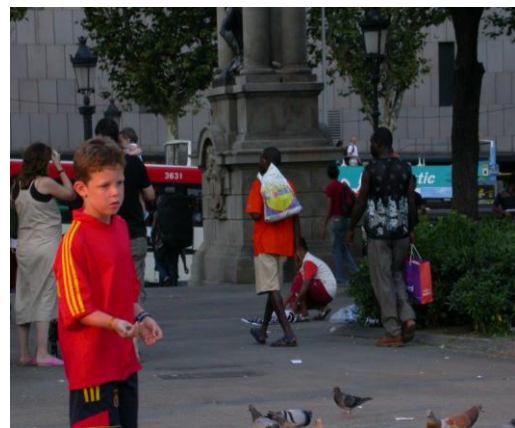


Marks of identity

Some ways of dressing seem to obey very specific codes, such as those of some young adolescents, who habitually cluster around the “Monument to Francesco Macià”. Their clothing style (wide trousers, sports cap and t-shirt) corresponds to an “urban style” adopted by groups of young people identified as “Latinos” and which relates to fashions appearing in “transnational” urban contexts.

Thus, many identity marks may be ostentatiously displayed as carefully and deliberately self-effacing. The game of appearances, as we well know, is very complex and is always deciphered on the basis of (conscious or unconscious) preconceived patterns.¹⁹

Class, phenotype and gender inhere in people’s bodies, both their tangible and their imaginary bodies, says Moira Gatens (1996), since images, symbols and beliefs shape the social and political reality of individuals and groups. A person is grasped first through their body. The body presents and represents simultaneously. We present ourselves and are present through our bodies. Our body bears within it our social identity, it *is* this identity. This why we work on our bodies to make them presentable. We mould them as best we can to the shape that is considered legitimate. But bodies are not simple surfaces to be written on or presented. Bodies are also actors. The ethnographer of urban spaces must therefore decode what the dance of bodies in public space tells us and try to understand how these bodies are changing with the generalized acceleration of mobility. The aim is thus to scrutinize the social logics through which a public place becomes something more than a territory for access and circulation, a network of unstable relations among strangers or vague acquaintances, a constant, changing proliferation.



¹⁹ During the informal conversations we had with various users of the square, the question of identity was an unavoidable theme and enabled to adjust or to readjust preconceived ideas on the identity of the interlocutors and to share impressions on those of the other occupiers of the square.



“Bags” series

Images and sounds which guided the ethnography of the square

Thus, the photographs and recorded sounds were more than simple illustrations or evidence of our presence on the place of our study. They became tools and stimuli to thinking, which enabled us to build the ethnography of the square. Let us mention finally that the use of the camera during the work in situ implied a permanent dialogue among different images produced concretely or mentally (when it was not possible to record them on the spur of the moment). The discussion of the photographs that we could not take was itself instructive.

Our photography, in its exploratory phase, enabled us to describe, to “write with light” (according to the Greek etymology photo-graphein), and in this process it led to a double disclosure. On the hand, it revealed aspects of the reality observed that were not always perceptible through a text-dominated observation, as we have noted above. Indeed, according to Marcus Banks and Howard Morphy (1997), visual anthropology should mainly focus on these visual aspects of culture. The minuscule details that our naked eyes much less readily perceive suggested new ways to approach fundamental aspects of our research which might not have emerged so easily with other methods.

On the other hand, photography revealed to us our own gaze. It made us think not only about the photographs we were taking but also about what had not been photographed. Our photographic eye incorporates, whether we are aware of it or not, a series of presuppositions, a mass of accumulated knowledge related to other images that have shaped the way we understand and picture cities. So, while at the outset our photographic approach was mainly descriptive and observational, we became immersed in some of the most intimate aspects of the square, with close-ups, sometimes extreme close-ups, concentrating on the textures of the place, as we advanced in our work and as we began to discover what the groups implied in terms of choreographies, as we increasingly understood them as an integral part of the space observed. This enabled us to break out of the realist paradigm of pure, unfiltered observation, to include elements of the poetics of the urban space, as advocated by Pierre Sansot (1971).

While the visual is essential for understanding the dynamism of any urban space, its sound characteristics are no less important. From the distant rumble of traffic on the roads adjoining the square to the cooing of pigeons, the whispers of the smooching lovers on public benches or on lawns, to the shouting and laughing strollers playing with the pigeons in the centre of the square, via the various exchanges and conversations in different languages, captured during our work in situ, all these sounds fully contribute to the specific configuration of the place. Although we could not record all these sounds during the first phase of our research, we still “registered” them following the model we used with the photographic material, in other words we noted them and then created a form for each of them like those the IPEC asked us to complete for the photographs. These forms mentioned their different characteristics, first specifying whether we were dealing with a panorama (undifferentiated murmur, wind rustling in the trees, rain pattering on the mosaic pavement, etc.), a general view (differentiated murmur, various accents and languages, etc.) or a close-up, i.e. sounds whose sources can be identified easily (siren or driving by of a police car, exchanges between a vendor and his customers, comments of a tourist guide, etc.), which we designated a “sound map”. We had deliberately kept the visual registers to catalogue the sounds and conversations we heard, thereby implicitly echoing the database of photographic material, from which we also borrowed the other categories (type of sound, duration, date and location of the “shot,” summary of its content).

Fragment 9

Exchanges in French among four people, apparently a family of tourists. Close-up.

3-4 minutes

Tuesday 12 July 2005

On a bench in the second row, corner B.

Exchanges between the three people sitting on the same bench as the researcher, and a man who arrived saying:

“I’ve been looking for you everywhere!” (in a reproachful tone)

“Have you been out of *Casa* long [a furniture store close to the square]?”

“Yeah, quite a time!”

“We told you we were going to look for a bench and we tried to find one that wasn’t too smelly” [Then comes an account of the various changes made by the people seated (a woman and two young girls) because of the smells around the benches in the third row. After these brief exchanges, they agree to walk towards the Ramblas “to have a drink”].

Fragment 15

Sounds

General view

5 minutes

Monday 15 August 2005, afternoon

In the centre of the square by corner D

A firecracker explodes. The pigeons fly away immediately. Flutter of wings as pigeons take off then fly in circles (squawking and flapping of wings) with many onlookers exclaiming “oh!”, “ah!” and “heel”, in unison.

Note: This phenomenon recurred three times within 15 minutes.

Examples of sheets generated



Conversation in Russian. In this area of the square (corner B), it was also common to find newspapers or journals in Russian, left behind on the benches or small advertisements in Cyrillic, stuck to the lamp posts.

Paying attention to the sounds produced on and around the square, we could note that life in general, and the life of the square in particular, is composed of these sensory aspects which incorporate a range of significations, relationships and tensions inscribed in the bodies and cityscapes that photography enabled us to reveal. It was then that the notion of ambience, developed by the CRESSON laboratory at the National School of Architecture in Grenoble, became meaningful. The urban and architectural ambience no longer defines the space simply by its physical, built-up, tangible dimension but also through the social

interactions governing it and the phenomena of perception linked to the involvement of the body (as a feeling subject) within it. So space is no longer defined only by its shape but also by the way it is experienced.

The capture of sounds and pictures thus provided us with an element which is not always welcome in the social sciences, namely inclusion of the unexpected, the non-measurable, which breaks the pre-established patterns, the rigid models framing the research. In photography and sound recording, the unpredictable, the random, the unexpected have a value that goes beyond the rational frameworks, the “*studium*” (Barthes, 1982) of photography, but which provides a dose of freshness and vitality to be integrated into our ethnographic accounts. Urban life is itself composed of these unexpected events, these glances and ironies, just as the Plaça de Catalunya is a meeting place for surveillance and creativity, minor resistances and inevitable and benign randomness.

The contribution of these sounds and images or of what could be termed the photographic eye²⁰ thus unfolded at several levels: as field diaries (but with pictures and sounds this time), as tools of analysis, but also as material for the dissemination of research which was first formalized as a photographic sequence accompanied by sound ambiances of the Plaça de Catalunya that we have reproduced below. This sequence aimed to be the synthesis of our research and the presentation of the elements that we had encountered when observing the Plaça de Catalunya – namely, bodies and their language, the clothing styles, the identity marks, the objects and gestures that are used to establish relationships, and the transformation of the public space in its materiality, the negotiations of spaces in the implicit game of looks, the appropriation of space.

A photographic sequence, accompanied by sound ambiances, to present the results of our research²¹

When we describe, we construct, and it is precisely to emphasize this constructivist aspect that we disconnected images and sounds in the sequence (using the patter of rain over sunny pictures, for example), to stress the fact that we did not consider images and sounds as mimetic productions of the real world but rather as traces of it. Like the ethnographic text, it is constructed objects that refer to the particular act of an observer (a photographer and sound recorder), which rules out considering image and sound outside their relationship with him or her. The photographs make things visible more than they reproduce the visible, just as

²⁰ Echoing the “filming eye” suggested by Claudine de France (1992), we mean by “photographic eye” paying heed to the way the real world is shaped during the recording, then at the time of editing. The aim would be to emulate the work of the still camera (or the movie camera in the case of cinema) when observing, recording or organizing the ethnographic material. It is the pencil-eye of Vertov and Jean Rouché (1968), with or without a camera, to which we have added a pair of ears.

²¹ The montage can be seen in the “Essay” section of the journal. We presented it in 2006, at the conference which followed the 25th edition of the Bilan du Film Ethnographique (Overview of the ethnographic film) in Paris with the paper “Essai d’ethnographie visuelle ou comment cerner le pouls de la place de Catalogne au travers de photographies et d’ambiances sonores” (Visual ethnography essay or how to take the pulse of the Plaça de Catalunya through photographs and sound ambiances), which introduced our approach. The latter is available on the following link: <http://comitedufilmethnographique.com/nadja-monnet-et-maribel-tovar/>.

sound recordings allow one to listen better. The images and sounds are therefore not neutral documents. They are both sources of information and interpretations of the reality. As Howard Becker wrote (2002), we know that images are constructed, that they can be made to say (or not say) almost anything we want them to, but “we also know that in our daily lives we look at photographic images and think (...) that we have learned about something beyond the photographer's ideas and beliefs.” That is why Becker prefers to speak of photographs as “visual evidence,” which enables us to avoid the “muddle about 'truth' and talk more realistically and reasonably about what photographs can actually do for social science arguments” (2002: 4).

The montage presented here draws inspiration from the works of John Berger and Jean Mohr, that is to say, a critical posture with respect to the supposed revealing capacity of the single image, considering on the contrary the possibilities of montage, or photographic narrative, as an integral part of the construction of an ethnographic narration. In their book *Another Way of Telling*, i.e. storytelling with photographs, Berger and Mohr (1982) distance themselves from two genres, from which we would also wish to distance our sequence – photographic reporting and the photo-novel. A photographic report may well relate a fact, but purely descriptively and from an outsider's viewpoint (i.e. that of someone who comes in for the occasion to “cover” the event, without having the time to gain a full sense of the situation described); and in a photo-novel, photography is reduced to being an element in the reproduction of a story built on the codes of cinema and theatre.

The offer of this collaboration between a photographer and a writer was an invitation to reflect on the articulation between ethnographic and photographic narrative, and on a type of narration that articulates particular events with other, more general ones, without necessarily being constructed on the basis of a given linearity, since the 150 photos of the sequence entitled “If every time” (1982: 131-275), dealing with the life of a female peasant born in the Alps at the beginning of last century, are indeed presented in a certain order but the reader-spectator is free to look at them in any order. This is also the approach of the “photoethnographic narrative” proposed by Luiz Eduardo Robinson Achutti (2004: 123) although Achutti grants more prominence to words in his approach than Berger and Mohr do in the photographic series mentioned above.²² Like them, Achutti introduces his sequence of 161 film photos with a short contextualizing text on his research work in the National Library of France (BNF), but follows it with two other texts. The first is a transcription of the visitors' book of the exhibition he put on in the corridors of the BNF for the people with whom he had worked. The second is a rewriting from the words left by the visitors at the exhibition (who in that case were also his interlocutors during his research). The whole work presents us with a polyphonic reflection on the relationships between the staff and the building, and their strategies for adapting to and appropriating the premises.

²² In *A Seventh Man* (1975), another collective work by these two authors, the balance between texts and images is quite different from that in this sequence, in which the visual takes precedence over the words

From the photographic and sound sequence to the multimedia essay

The limits to our essay in sound and photographic ethnography nonetheless appeared rapidly in the light of the perplexity of our spectators, which was in strong contrast to the enthusiasm inspired in us by the many new “illuminations” that struck us after each viewing. The need to make explicit, and not only verbally, our interpretation of the material presented in the sequence led us to construct a multimedia essay²³ in which the images and sounds are as important as (and possibly more important than) the texts, in any case not subordinate to them. So it was a matter of revaluing the images and sounds, but not at the expense of the text, playing them *with*, not *against*, the writing, and thinking also with our eyes and ears, thereby paraphrasing the title of the epilogue to Maresca's book (1996), with the addition of hearing.²⁴

The main question then is how to establish links between these different elements. As Bruce Mason and Bella Dicks (1999) emphasize, the most interesting promise of the hypermedia lies not so much in their “rhizomatic” and polyphonic possibilities as in the opportunity to combine different registers: sounds, texts and images.

“There are potential gains to be derived from exploring how ethnographic representation can simultaneously be a verbal and a pictorial, a visual and an aural activity. [...] A well-constructed ethnographic hypermedia environment would seek to take advantage of the specific communicative modalities of each medium, rather than seeing them as add-on ‘special effects’ (Mason & Dicks, 1999: n.p.).

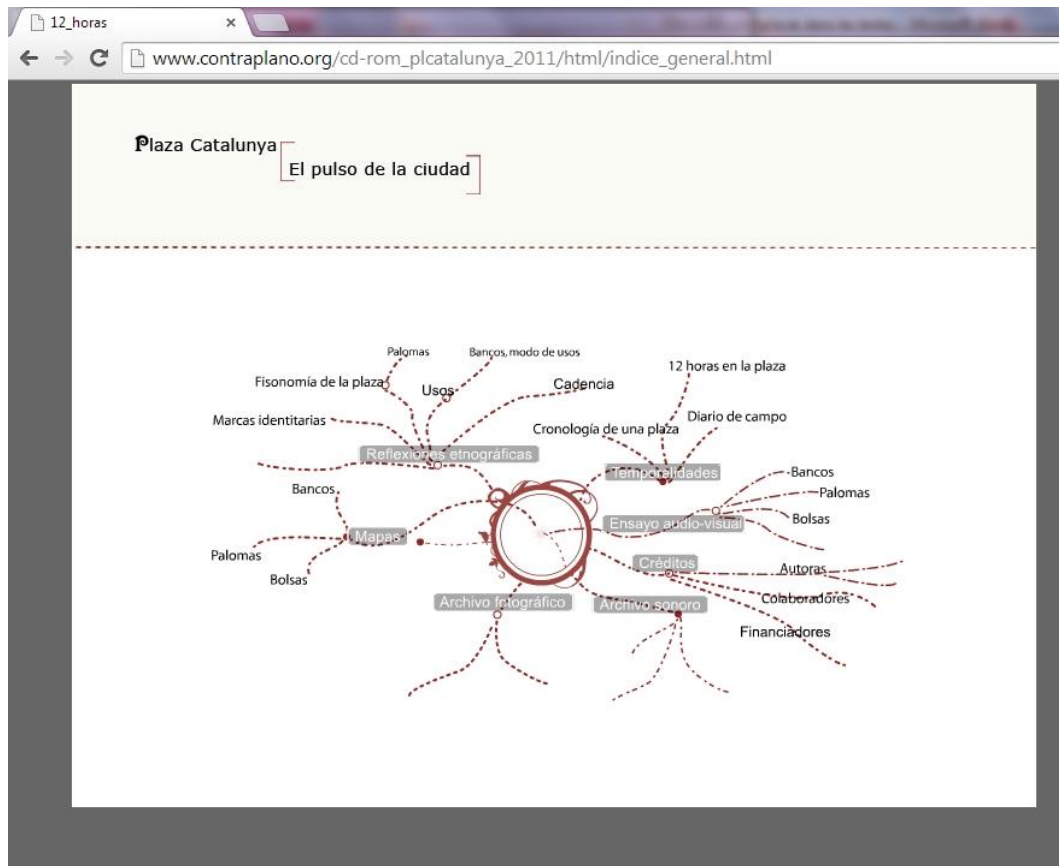
Hence we took up these challenges and explored the possibilities of the Web medium by conceiving the multimedia essay with the assistance of the Web designer and anthropologist Jorgelina Barrera and the computer specialist Federico Joselevich.

It opens with an image reproducing the pattern of the centre of the square, which the user clicks on to enter and arrive at the main page, which contains the sound and image montage presented above.²⁵ Top left, the pattern of the centre of the square gives access to the main items of a circular table of contents whose parts appear and disappear as the cursor is moved. By clicking again in the (now enlarged) centre of the pattern, the different parts forming the Web page can be unfolded completely.

²³ Unfortunately, the model could not be developed beyond what can be seen starting from this link: http://www.contraplano.org/cd-rom_plcatalunya_2011/intro.html.

²⁴ The title of the epilogue to Maresca's book is: “Thinking also with our eyes”. Maresca goes on to say that “the ambition would rather be to nurture the original link with images during the intellectual work properly speaking, so as to reactivate at any time the powerful creative engine provided by vision” (1996: 240).

²⁵ The essay contained in the multimedia package is a new, reworked version of the essay in sound and image ethnography presented at the Bilan du film ethnographique in Paris.



This time, not only is the pattern of the surface of the centre of the Plaça de Catalunya completed, but dotted lines run across it and extend beyond it. They suggest the itineraries followed by the passers-by and indicate the developments of different portions visible on the previous phase.

The visitor can return at any time to this table of contents by clicking on the star in the middle of the square, represented in the upper left corner of the screen, or go to any other main parts (maps, ethnographic reflections, temporalities, audio-visual essay, credits, sound and photographic archives) by clicking on one of the itineraries from the centre of the square. The idea is to enable free, non-linear browsing among the different elements. Some are currently empty, although their contents are already planned and the material selected for incorporation in them, but others remain intentionally nameless to suggest that the themes still to be addressed go beyond those presented. So the table of contents remains open or in the making, since it can be expanded by further research and by reflections which might spring from the material so far provided.²⁶

²⁶ Ideally, we would have liked visitors to be able to post comments and additional material to enrich the site and generate debates around the questions addressed, according to the philosophy of interactive, collaborative platforms. Long before them, in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (another important reference for verbal-visual

We would also have preferred the audio-visual montage²⁷ to open up full-screen (at present it is only visible in a small format, in which it loses a great deal of its strength) to indicate its centrality in our reflections. It did indeed have special status relative to the other parts, which unfold from it.

Let us now reconsider this sound and visual sequence, in order to discuss the linearity which we tried to combat. In deciding to organize our sequence as a slide show, accompanied by sound ambiances, we did reintroduce it. After a long discussion on the appropriateness of that procedure, we finally decided to present the sequence in that way since the sounds gave a real thickness to the images. It would nonetheless be interesting to give visitors the choice of viewing the montage with or without sound.

To enable visitors to reorder the montage as they choose, one would need programming that allows free reordering, as in the projects developed by Ulrich Fischer²⁸ and Célia Gradín Montero.²⁹ Because we could not do so, we incorporated a more rudimentary system which, at the moment, only allows the user to superimpose three images with the rest of the montage: those that appear on the screen when the cursor is moved over the numbers at the bottom of the audio-visual sequence. A space is provided on the right to list the topics addressed in the montage.

Ideally, each picture in the sequence should be linked with the maps and with the photographic archives. Then the viewer/reader would have been able to pause the show and bring up information on the images and sounds reproduced. At present this linkage cannot be made, but an example of the type of information we would have liked to make available to the visitor is seen in the “maps” column, which is arranged according to the themes presented in the audio-visual montage.

The functioning of the multimedia browsing: the example of the “Pigeons” item

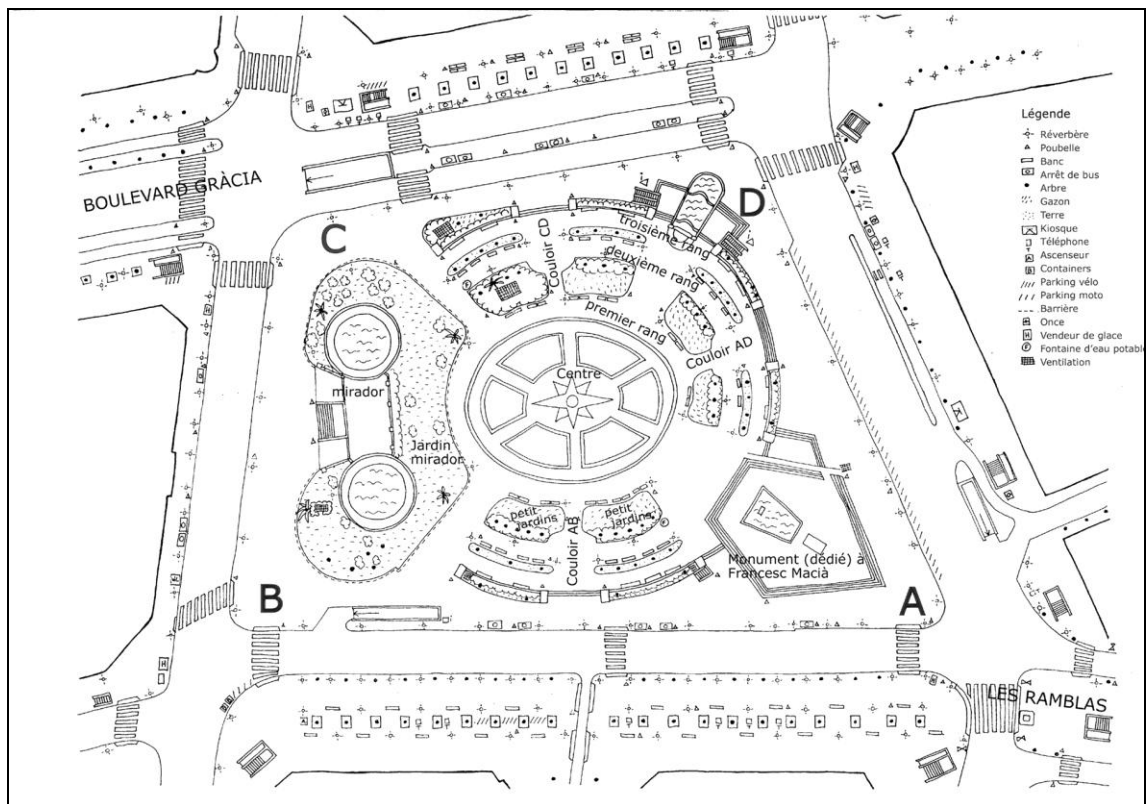
The visitor has several ways to enter the different themes that we wish to develop. If we take the example of the pigeons, which can be considered a constituent element or even as possible actors in the square, one can enter this theme by clicking on the “Pigeons” item, on the right of the audio-visual sequence, or by clicking on “Maps” then on “Pigeons” in the menu in the top corner of all the pages. Taking this second route, we arrive at a map which has been redesigned on the basis of the working overview presented here:

texts), James Agee was already concerned about his readers’ opinion, when he wrote: “Those who wish actively to participate in the subject, in whatever degree of understanding, friendship, or hostility, are invited to address the authors in care of the publishers” (2001: xi).

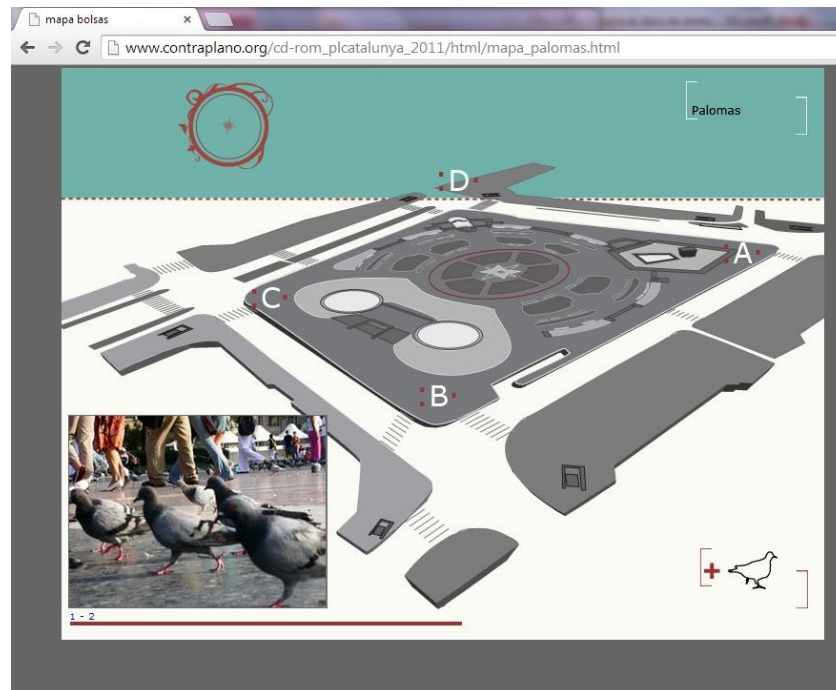
²⁷ I deliberately write “audio-visual” to stress that we intentionally dissociated the audio from the visual. For more detail on this approach and on the principles of the montage see the paper mentioned in Note 21 above.

²⁸ <http://www.walking-the-edit.net>.

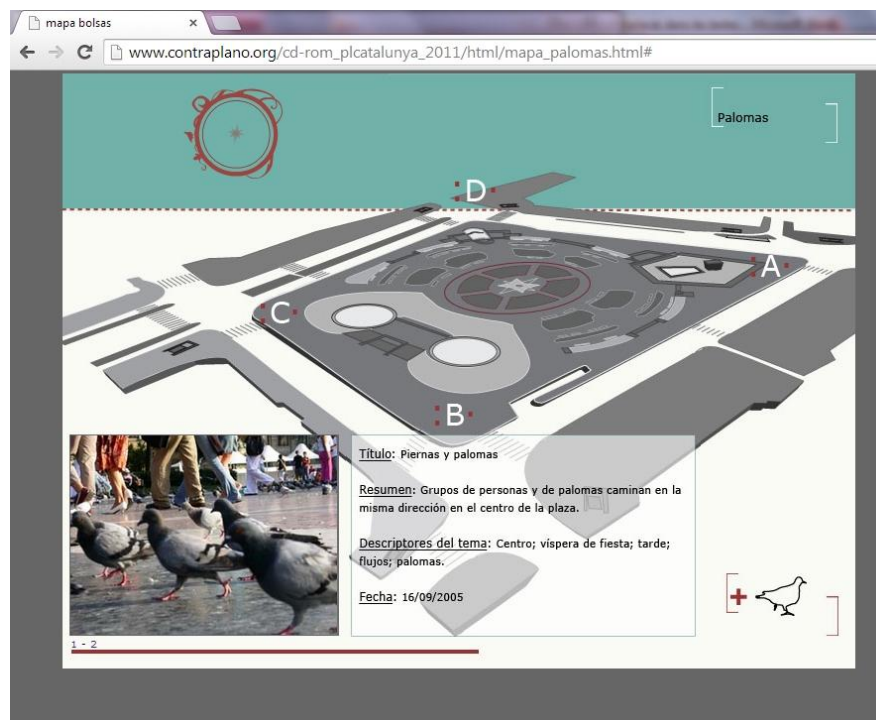
²⁹ <http://www.kilkor.net>.



Survey of the square made by architect Julie Rouault and used during our work in situ



It is planned to present here a series of photos associated with this topic by locating them on the map. An information sheet on the photograph appears when the user clicks on the number at the bottom of the picture.



These succinct data (title, summary, themes and date) were modelled on those provided to the IPEC for its database. They nevertheless violate our principle of non-repetition, since they contain a verbal description of the image in addition to a location – not only in the titles the IPEC asked us to place on every image, but also in the content of the “summaries” of the photography.

Indeed, the main challenge of this multimedia essay (apart from the IT challenges) was first and foremost not to say the same thing with different means. In other words, we did not want, for instance, to present a picture of a pigeon with a cooing sound and a caption saying that pigeons coo. Rather, we wanted to give information on the role of these birds in the square, to show images of different types of activities associated with them and to make their presence heard using sound fragments related to them.

To obtain information on these birds which differs from their location in the pictures, the user must click on [+ Pigeon] at the bottom of the page on the right of the entry through the maps, which leads us to the page one could have reached by entering through the “Pigeons” item on the right of the sound and photographic essay. By clicking on either of them, one is led to the verbal-visual page below, with on the right a short introduction (max. 2 screens) to the theme and on the left a sequence of images that can be scrolled by clicking on the numbers situated at the bottom. Clicking on the white circle below the photos, the user is offered various icons to switch to other pages: the loudhailer icon to access sound archives, the M to go back to the maps, the arrow to retrieve the audio-visual essay, etc.



Since their introduction into the square in 1929, pigeons have been a “decorative” element, but their function goes far beyond this. They are at the origin of most of the activities and interactions taking place on the square. If we observe their movement, we can see a real symbiosis between these birds and the human users of the square, on the one hand because human activity enables the pigeons to survive and reproduce and on the other hand because their movements around and the ways they occupy the space are governed by the human activities on the square. Pigeons are part of the very definition of the square and generate discourses [link to sound archives, fragment 7, which reproduces a dialogue between a woman eating a sandwich on her own and the pigeons] and performances. During our fieldwork, the pigeons were one of the elements on the square that echoed the then current media debate on the city's image: we could experience directly on the benches of the square the issue of their overpopulation, which was abundantly addressed in the free newspapers at the time of our research [link to ethnographic reflections].

Translation of the text introducing the pigeons theme

It should be emphasized that even within this introductory text, links to other parts of the multimedia essay are planned but not yet implemented. The link relating to ethnographic reflections contains longer developments on this theme. Concretely, as regards the pigeons, they occupy seven screens, divided into two parts: the reflections themselves, followed by ethnographic examples from our field notes.

I shall conclude this presentation by remarking that we were inspired by Albert Piette's suggestion of making links between images and texts with symbols which highlight certain details of the images and the texts.³⁰ Although this attempt remains at the embryonic stage and deserves more in-depth reflection, we should mention the meticulous work of Jorgelina Barrera in her choice of the graphics and the colours, which are never bland or arbitrary.

³⁰ A similar attempt to do this is made when we discuss the public benches to emphasise the importance of the postures and the gestures which invite or discourage access to some of them [http://www.contraplano.org/cd-rom_plcatalunya_2011/html/bancos.html].

They were selected on the basis of the corpus of photographs produced in our fieldwork and debated at length.

Sounds and photographs to write/describe the dynamics of urban space

Our reflection finally turned towards issues concerned with the composition and selections of words, images and sounds to describe the physical characteristics and social dynamics of the square and its users. This led us to consider questions about the visualization and “sonorization” (the presentation through images and sounds) of the construction of knowledge, i.e. the manifestation of the choices and positions of the researchers.

In anthropology, photographic practice is often purely forgotten or relegated to the role of “decorative evidence,” in contrast to the increasingly frequent, although still too rare, use of cinematographic language and video. It is not a question of exploring the reasons why photography has been marginalized in the social sciences, but rather of underscoring, as Elizabeth Edwards has suggested, the fact that it is precisely the specificities of photography, the very features that may have led to its loss of appeal for “visual ethnographers,” that should be recovered and exploited to the full:

“Photography can communicate about culture, peoples' lives, experiences and beliefs, not at the level of surface description, but as a visual metaphor, which bridges the space between the visible and the invisible, which communicates not through the realist paradigm but through a lyrical expressiveness” (Edwards, 1997: 58).

Like film, photography provides knowledge not only through an accumulation of written data but also through emotion. Roland Barthes wrote that the photograph “immediately yields up those ‘details’ which constitute the very raw material of ethnographic knowledge” (1982: 28). Thus, photographic and ethnographic writing meet up on certain points, such as their fragmentary nature, the meticulous and material ways in which they dwell on details which in turn enable us to look further, to evoke or transport ourselves to a wider context than their original one. In this sense, visual images, like ethnographic texts, work as much with what we see/write as with what we do not see/do not write.

When John Berger declared that a single photograph can “relate the particular to the general,” he went on to say that “when it happens across a number of pictures, the nexus of relative affinities, contrasts and comparisons can be that much wider and more complex” (Berger and Mohr, 1995: 281). This link between the particular and the general became increasingly obvious as we progressed in our survey of the square. We found there mechanisms reflecting not only the reality of the square but also the way social life and the (obvious or underlying) public agenda in Barcelona operate: the campaign in favour of civic-mindedness, street vendors, mass tourism, begging, mass consumption, etc. are topics that we could touch upon on the basis of the presence (more obvious in some cases than others) of “clues” left by certain objects, certain attitudes, or through non-verbal elements, often captured on the fly by our cameras.

Photography and sound recording are thus much more than simple tools available to researchers. They deserve to be paid greater attention when analysing contemporary urban dynamics. Their communication potential should also lead us to ponder the ways of incorporating them further when disseminating our research, as the pioneering works of Margaret Mead, Lewis W. Hine, or James Agee and Walker Evans have shown. How do we deal with images and how do we articulate them with sounds, utterances and writings to form verbal-visual texts? This question leads us to another debate, mentioned briefly at the beginning of this paper, i.e. the possibility or not of thinking through images. We have hardly touched on this vast question here, but it is fundamental to the recognition of photography in its capacity to intervene in the very context of observation.

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Portraying the divided city. Photographing the Belfast peacelines

Abstract

In my research on the Belfast peacelines, which sought to understand the process behind their construction, photography was used as an investigative tool to locate devices, analyse the transformation of the urban environment and describe the materiality of place. In this article, I question the links between photography and other types of data and whether it is possible to achieve a descriptive neutrality in “research” pictures, in contrast to an aesthetic that is supposedly specific to art photography.

Keywords

Belfast, photography, peacelines, conflict, planning

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In Belfast, urban space is segregated not only according to social class but also according to the city's two political and religious communities: Catholic nationalists/republicans on the one hand, and Protestant unionists/loyalists on the other.¹ Walls known as *peacelines* or *peace walls* were built in the city from the beginning of the civil unrest (the "Troubles") until quite recently (Figure 1). The first peaceline was erected in 1969 by the British army following a series of major riots. Such devices were used as policing and conflict management tools by the security forces. Paradoxically, since the Peace Agreement was signed in 1998, these structures have proliferated, often at the request of the local population, owing to remaining violence and tensions on the ground.

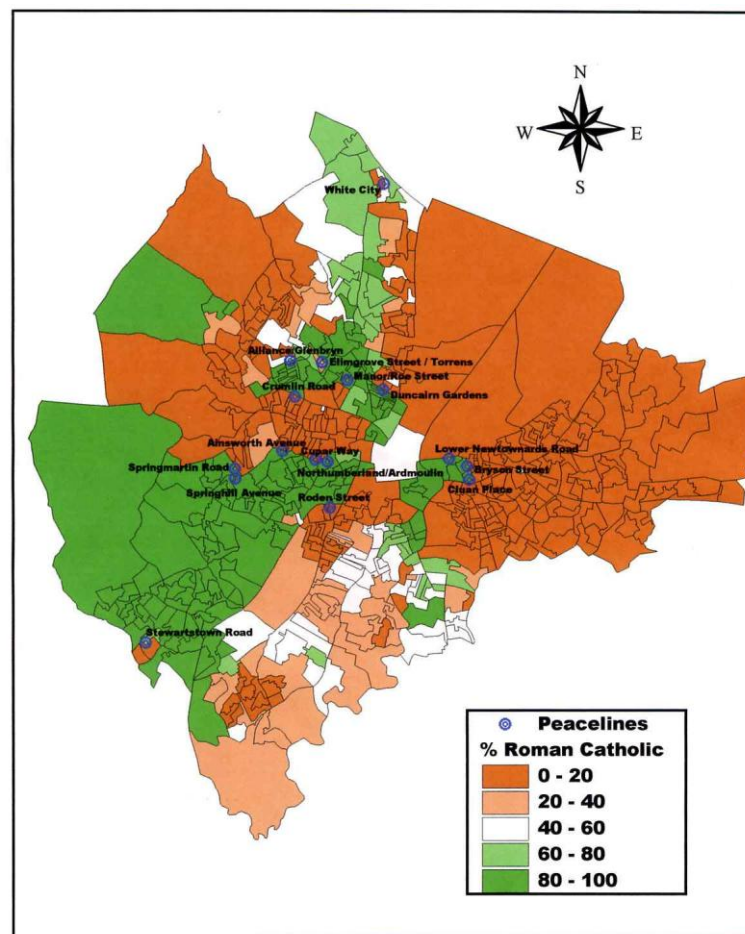


Fig. 1. Distribution of Roman Catholics in Belfast according to the 1991 census and peacelines built as of 1998 (Source: NIHE, *Geographic Information System*, 1999)².

¹ This division is social, political and religious: regardless of actual religious beliefs and practices, groups and individuals will typically identify with and refer to one of two religious denominations, i.e. Catholic or Protestant. The latter encompasses many different churches, in fact, the most common being the Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican (Church of Ireland) churches.

² Data available at the time of the survey.

The walls are situated on the boundaries of segregated neighbourhoods in the inner city of Belfast – critical locations where violence was at its apex.³ They partially enclose the areas in question. But the walls are not only a materialization of division, nor a paroxysmal symptom of the conflict. They result from a particular social process, in part autonomous, involving a number of specific stakeholders. My research (Ballif 2006) documented the genesis and the continued (and reinforced) existence of the walls in the urban space and the strategies implemented by the public agencies. They were installed by the army initially, then by the police from the mid-1970s under the aegis of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), and finally have been within the remit of the Department of Justice since 2010. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), responsible of the provision of social housing in the province, took care of their maintenance⁴ from the 1980s and 1990s onwards. Their appearance was “softened” and to some extent normalized, and they became a permanent element of the townscape in the inner city. They thus represented a security tool but were also elements of urban space. Rather than attempting to write a history of the peacelines, built in a situation of emergency according to a very poorly documented decision-making process, I tried to understand the logics of action of the security forces in urban space. I tried to understand the planning processes and the way they evolved over the years, describing the different rationales of the various stakeholders, especially in the contested spaces. The phenomenon of the building of peacelines is not very well circumscribed, even for the authorities. The chronology of the events is not clearly documented in the archives and is difficult to trace back over time. The first peacelines date from 1969 and the early 1970s. Although the process of building peacelines was a continuous one over time, it is possible to identify a second round of construction in the mid-1980s, followed by a third and final phase from the mid-1990s. The exact number of peacelines depends on the methodology used to count them.⁵ The NIHE estimates that about a hundred exist today, whereas the NIO counted approximately fifty walls.

Few studies existed at the time on the subject of the peacelines. In most research on Belfast and Northern Ireland, peacelines were mentioned merely as a backdrop of the conflict. However, certain geographers developed some very interesting work on the peacelines and on their impact on segregation and urban policies. Fred Boal was the first to investigate them: he studied the social interactions in sectarian neighbourhoods in West Belfast and showed that the first peaceline built in 1969 follows pre-existing social borders. Brendan Murtagh (1994, 1995; Shirlow and Murtagh 2006) studied their socio-economic impacts and showed that the presence of peacelines exacerbates urban poverty. Scott Bollens (1998, 2000) considered the peacelines as an aspect of territorial division and assessed their impact on urban policies, in particular in terms of the duplication of services and facilities. Research on the spatial dimensions of the peacelines is scarcer still (Dawson 1984a, 1984b).

³ Over three quarters of the murders linked to the Troubles occurred at or near the interfaces between sectarian neighbourhoods in Belfast (Shirlow 2003).

⁴ This agency is responsible for providing and managing social housing in Northern Ireland.

⁵ Indeed, while official inventories distinguish various elements added over time, differences exist in the methods used to count them. This uncertainty is visible in the official documents produced by government departments and their agencies.

Lastly, the peacelines sometimes appear in the background of works of fiction, as in *Eureka Street* by Robert McLiam Wilson (1997), for example.

In order to document the peaceline building process for my research, I collected various types of sources. For the early structures of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the only sources available to me were press cuttings and a general chronology of events established by Deutsch and Magowan (1973). The enquiries conducted by parliamentary committees into the civil unrest in 1969 produced only general evaluations of the role of the police and the army. Neither the British army nor the police archives were open to the public at the time of my research. Knowledge was disseminated in the individual and collective memories of the security forces. Oral sources were unavailable, as it was impossible to find and contact the officers in charge at this time, many of whom were certainly already retired and, moreover, unlikely to talk on classified matters. For the more recent period, similar difficulties arose, due to the high level of mobility of military and police personnel. Furthermore, it is practically impossible to ask security personnel about action taken during previous postings. Consequently, I met with a number of serving police officers, whom I interviewed regarding the decisions and problems they were facing at the time of the study. I could not meet with anyone from the army because they were no longer in charge of the peacelines or responsible for matters of law and order. I interviewed representatives of the Northern Ireland Office, namely the head of the Security and Policy Division and intelligence officers in Belfast. I also collected statistical data from the NIHE. Interviews with civil servants from this body enabled me to understand their action with regard to the peacelines.

The objective was also to take into account the spatial integration of the walls into the urban space and their impact on the urban area. The starting point for my survey was the unexpected discovery that these structures were discontinuous and only partially enclosed sections of urban space: rather than compartmentalizing space, the walls seemed to be markers of contested space and conflicts. Moreover, while the most imposing walls are highly visible (Figure 2), other structures were less visually imposing and could be mistaken for an ordinary property boundary. (Figures 3 and 4). I considered these walls as material artefacts made by the security and housing agencies in response to the conflict in Northern Ireland. The materiality of the objects had been a very important dimension in my analysis. The field survey encompassed *in situ* observations, in order to produce an inventory of the peacelines, together with a typology of the structures and their locations, and describe the spatial device. I then compared these visual data with the discourses of the stakeholders involved in urban policy. I also adopted a sensitive approach to the object and to the urban space. I walked these areas many times and took photographs and notes describing the peacelines.



Fig. 2. Cupar Way (June 4th, 2001) © F. Ballif.



Fig. 3. Torrens Avenue (June 2nd, 2001) © F. Ballif.



Fig. 4. Crumlin Road, Ardoyne (March 13th, 2000) © F. Ballif.

Photography was a research tool in itself through its documentary function, which I shall comment upon first. It enabled me to negotiate my presence in deprived, sectarian neighbourhoods, where my foreign status already gave me a certain freedom of movement, and made it easier to obtain certain information; the making of images also encompassed a naïve initial assumption, which associated a neutral aesthetic with a scientific stance, and which must be scrutinized.

Photography as a research tool

I used photography as a research tool that enabled the description of a spatial device. Indeed, as Albert Piette states (2007, pp. 24–27) the photographic image is “a specific mode of knowledge”. The image is an imprint of the real, a clue; it forces the viewer to look at, and designates something. The isomorphic characteristic of the image (in that it gives access to the entirety of a situation at a given moment in time) means it does not say anything *by itself* but instead requires a descriptive commentary. Photographs associated with written notes and sketches functioned as an *aide-mémoire* and contributed to descriptions used to list and locate different structures. Photography also served to document shapes and materials. Finally, it was useful for “recording” the transformations of the peacelines, which changed over time, sometimes very quickly. Indeed, from the 1990s onwards, most of them were normalized in the course of urban regeneration and the renovation of public spaces. I was able to record some of these transformations during my fieldwork, and also made comparisons with older photos taken by others.

First and foremost, taking photographs and notes enabled me to produce an *inventory* of the peacelines, in the absence of any comprehensive documentation, and to locate them, as they are not marked on city maps (Figure 5). I also used photography to understand the structure of the peacelines. I wanted to photograph circumscribed and limited objects, namely the security walls built by the police or the Housing Executive. I wanted to capture these images in a clinical and exhaustive fashion, in order to grasp their materiality, their spatial layout and the configuration of the boundaries they marked. This corpus of images also made deferred observation possible; indeed, the written notes were enhanced and completed by the *a posteriori* observation of the photographs. The written descriptions provided further information on the configuration, dimensions and ground coverage of the walls. Consequently, my analysis included diagrams indicating the places where the pictures were taken, complemented by the photographs themselves and the corresponding descriptions (Figures 6a to 6e). Special attention was paid to the opening/closure of space, to thresholds, and to crossings (Figures 7 and 8). In these examples, the diagrams show that the enclosure of space concerns a relatively small surface area and that ground coverage is limited; the photographs show an ordinary townscape reshaped by the security devices and indicate that the enclosure is partial. In this way, the photographs complement the text and diagrams with the aim of giving a sense of the materiality of the studied object.

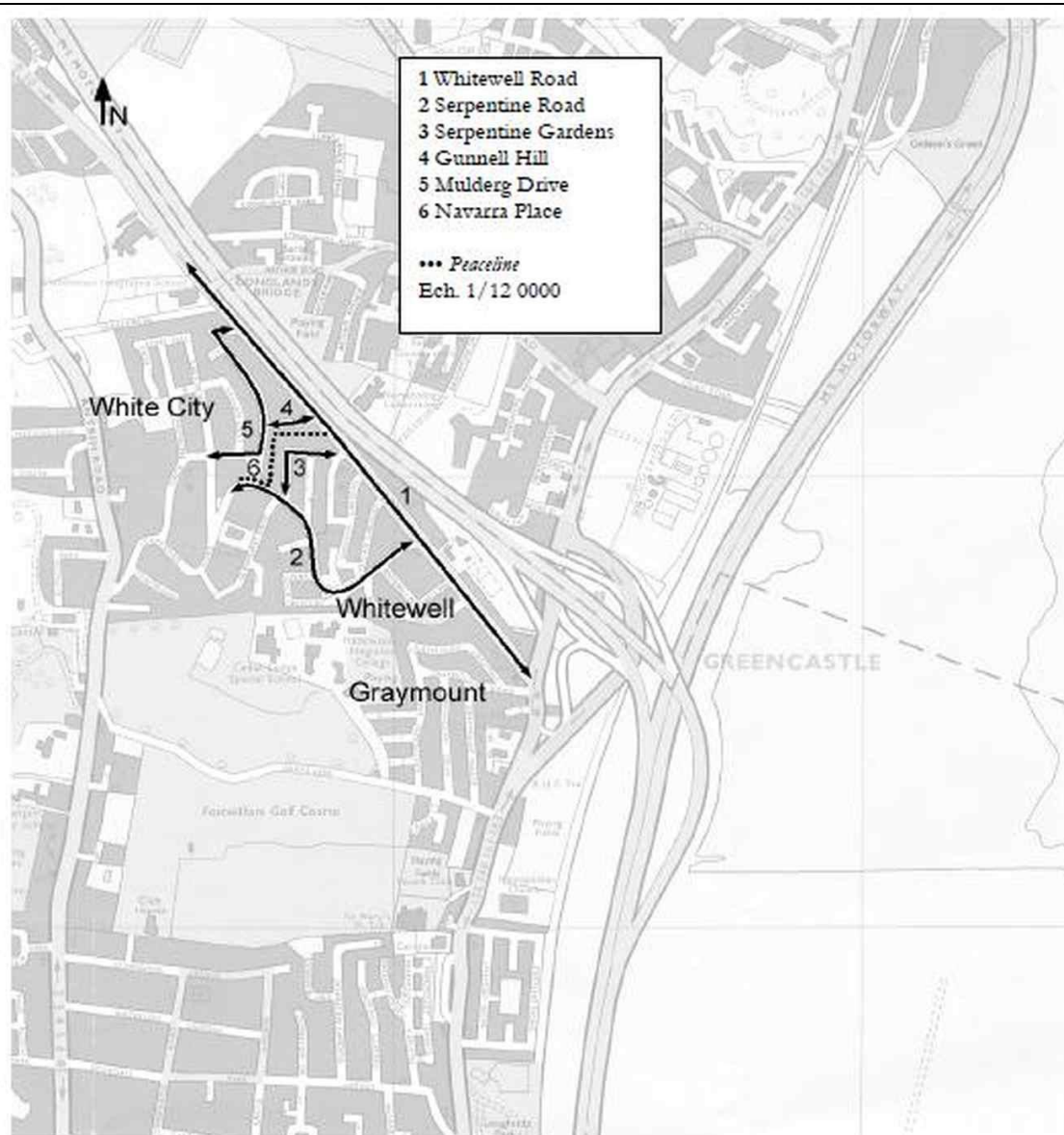


Figure 51 : *Peaceline*, White City (Plan réalisé à partir de *Belfast Streetfinder map*, Bartholomew, 1997 et les observations effectuées en 1999)

Fig. 5: Location map, White City © F. Ballif.

5 Le compartimentage urbain

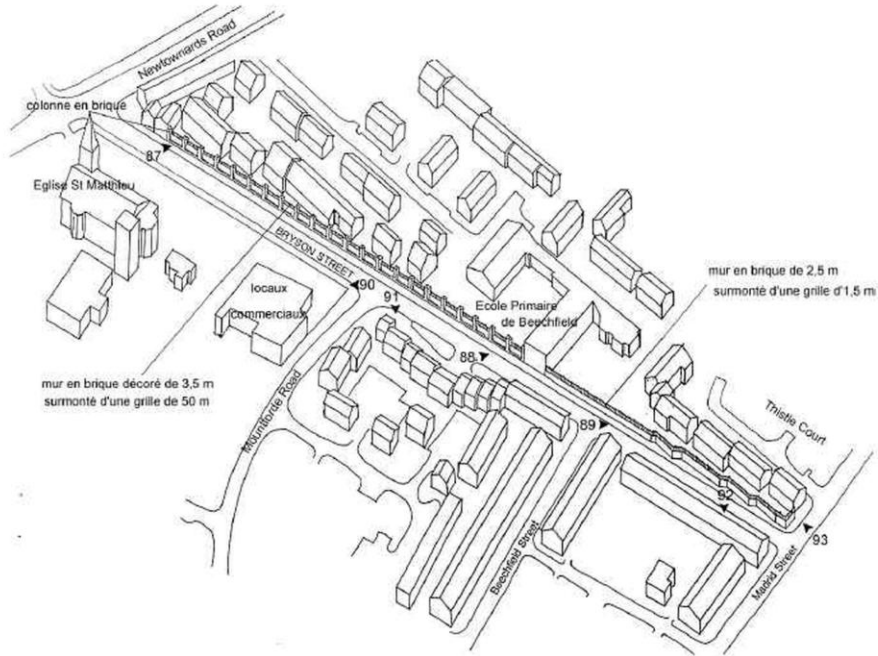


Figure 86 : *Peaceline*, Bryson Street (Schéma réalisé d'après EDC, *Belfast Peacelines Study*, 1991, p. 14 et les observations effectuées en mars 2000 et juin 2001)



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Figg. 6a to 6E: PhD extracts on the Bryson Street peaceline © F. Ballif.

5 Le compartimentage urbain

Figure 87 : Bryson Street, mur de sécurité (mars 2000)



Figure 88 : Bryson Street, pignon de l'école primaire de Beechfield (3 juin 2001)



Figure 89 : Bryson Street, mur de sécurité (3 juin 2001)

5 Le compartimentage urbain



Figure 90 : Locaux commerciaux de Bryson community enterprise, carrefour Bryson Street/Mountforde Street (3 juin 2001)



Figure 91 : Bryson Street, lotissement de la phase 6 de la RDA 26/27 (3 juin 2001)



Figure 92 : Bryson Street, St Matthew HAA (mars 2000)

La fermeture de Thistle Court

A l'extrémité sud de Bryson Street, près du carrefour de Madrid Street, les logements de la *St Matthew Housing Action Area* ont leurs façades tournées vers la rue (Figure 92). La priorité de la *St Matthew Housing Association* en charge de leur construction, était d'atteindre une densité maximale. Mais certains logements ne sont plus habités en raison de la localisation sur l'interface. Le carrefour de Bryson Street et Madrid Street est un *flashpoint* du quartier. Richard Williamson, chef du district n°2 de Belfast pour le NIHE, rapporte que des incidents mineurs s'y déroulent de façon chronique, les bandes d'adolescents du Short Strand et du quartier de Woodstock se bagarrent, les jets de pierre et les échauffourées y sont fréquents. Les tensions sont particulièrement sensibles durant la saison des défilés. Lors d'une prise de notes de terrain en juin 2001, un passant me raconte qu'il habite l'un des logements de la *St Matthew HAA* et que lors des dernières émeutes trois semaines auparavant, toutes ses vitres ont été cassées. En effet, ces incidents du 13 mai 2001 sont relatés par l'*Irish News*, journal nord-irlandais d'audience nationaliste. En face de la *St Matthew HAA*, Thistle Court, un petit lotissement du NIHE, est occupé par les protestants. Le NIHE cherche à assurer la sécurité de ses locataires et la rentabilité du parc locatif social. Or, le lotissement a un taux de vacance très élevé et plusieurs logements sont très endommagés (Figure 93). Les maisons de Madrid Street situées au carrefour de Bryson Street sont abandonnées.

5 Le compartimentage urbain



Figure 93 : Thistle Court avant la fermeture de Madrid Street (4 juin 2001)

Lors d'un entretien en mars 2000, Richard Williamson affirme qu'« une barrière physique pourrait résoudre le problème », mais qu'il existe un conflit d'intérêts entre les administrations à ce sujet. Les pouvoirs publics, les élus locaux et les riverains n'ont jamais pu s'entendre sur la fermeture de ces rues, bien que la question ait déjà été évoquée par le NIHE lors de la réhabilitation de Thistle Court en 1985. Richard Williamson évoque le statu quo politique local du milieu des années 1990. Le député DUP pour Belfast-Est, Peter Robinson, est en faveur d'une fermeture. Mais les paramilitaires des deux camps, par l'intermédiaire de leurs représentants politiques, le *Sinn Féin* et le *Progressive Unionist Party*, se sont mis d'accord pour qu'il n'y ait aucune barrière. Leurs hommes sur le terrain s'efforcent de limiter les tensions. La communauté est impliquée dans la réduction de la violence. La police, dont le commissariat est situé un peu plus loin dans Madrid Street, préfère garder un accès direct à Templemore Avenue et est opposée à la fermeture de Madrid Street. Elle est également opposée à la proposition d'une barrière semi-permanente, dont elle devrait assurer l'ouverture et la fermeture¹. Le NIHE gère les conséquences immobilières de cette situation. En 1998, il commande une étude sur la Tower Street HAA à un bureau d'études privé, *Building Design Partnership* (BDP), qui propose deux options : fermer Madrid Street et ainsi séparer catholiques et protestants, ou bien construire un dispositif permettant de condamner l'accès

¹ Entretien avec Richard Williamson, NIHE, District 2, *District manager*, 6 mars 2000.



Fig. 7. Peaceline, Serpentine Road/Mulderg Drive, view from Serpentine Road, White City (March 4th, 1999) © F. Ballif.



Fig. 8. Peaceline, Serpentine Road/Mulderg Drive, view from Navarra Place, White City (March 4th, 1999) © F. Ballif.

Technical choices condition the production of images. I produced my images before digital photography was the norm, and thus chose to use film, with which I was more familiar (in conjunction with a 24×36 mm SLR camera). The cost of developing photographs necessarily limited the number of shots taken. To begin with, I took a certain number of reconnaissance pictures, and then returned to peaceline sites several times to produce series of photos as data to analyse. These series were produced along the pedestrian routes that had to be followed to access both sides of the walls. I shot frontally, at eye level. I used colour films (to ensure a better description of the materials used, and to avoid the “aestheticized” effect of black-and-white pictures, which were tantamount to art photography in my naïve opinion), a 28 mm lens to capture each site in its entirety, a 50 mm lens to render “what it actually looked like” and zooms for focusing on particular details. I framed the photographs at eye level in order to provide a “pedestrian’s eye view”, although the streets were also much used, if not more so, by cars. The photographs were taken from the street, as I was interested in the production of public spaces in which the walls were situated, which enclosed these spaces. I also had the somewhat all-encompassing vision typical of the urban planner who analyses urban space from an external perspective⁶. I presented the photos side by side in order to obtain an impression of the ground coverage of the walls in the street (Figures 9 to 11).

I made the choice of using fixed images to show complex places because they allow for a better analysis of details⁷. The difficulty in analysing these images, however, lies in the

⁶ I did not go inside any of the houses to see how the outside is perceived from inside the home. The residents’ view, i.e. what they see from their home, did not interest me as such, as my research focused on public stakeholders and the planning process. Furthermore, the practical difficulties involved were dissuasive: entering people’s homes and connecting with residents would have been personally more challenging than I felt I was capable of.

⁷ In any case, filming was not possible from a technical standpoint, as I did not really know how to make moving images at the time; this was before the integration of video capabilities into mobile phones and digital cameras as standard, which has since made this technique far more accessible.

fact that each photograph captures only a small part of a bigger space. It was therefore important to link the images both graphically and analytically in the descriptions produced. Nevertheless, there was a risk that these images could hamper the viewer's understanding by assigning an inherent meaning to the phenomenon at play, that is to say by showing a fixed reality, whereas in fact this reality is constantly changing. Furthermore, photographs say nothing about the conditions in which urban space is produced or the processes involved. It was therefore necessary to link the pictures to the stakeholders' discourses.



Fig. 9. Peaceline, Manor Street (August 10th, 1999) © Florine Ballif.



Fig. 10. Peaceline, Crumlin Road, Ardoyne (March 13th, 2000) © F. Ballif.



Fig. 11. Suffolk Drive, brownfield site (June 4th, 2001) © F. Ballif.

Photographs creates a certain distance, as they can be examined in a different place and at a different time, making it possible to perceive things that went unnoticed at first glance. For instance, my photographs made me aware of details that I had not previously spotted regarding street layouts. At several sites, where a wall has been built across a previously open street, the footways have not been completely remodelled: a kerb is typically added at the end of the blocked street, the former route of which is still visible (Figure 12). The explanation for this lies in the distribution of roles among the public agencies involved: the highways department does not intervene in the construction of security walls. The cost issue may also render additional roadwork unnecessary. But it seems that the main reason lies in the authorities' insistence that these devices still be considered temporary measures. This analysis then led me to reassess the discourses of the officials I interviewed with regard to whether the peacelines truly are provisional. This contradiction is visible in the structure of the peacelines documented in the photographs: in many cases, while it is obvious that these structures are later additions to the urban space, the materials used (red brick) match those of the surrounding built environment (Figures 5 and 12).



Fig. 12. Renovated security gate, Mountcollyer/Tiger's Bay (August 1999) © F. Ballif.

Photographs were also useful in documenting transformations, either past or under way, thus becoming archives of a bygone state of existence. I photographed the same location at intervals of several months. At the end of the 1990s, following the peace process, the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) launched an “environmental improvement scheme” in order to give a more “pleasant” appearance to the peacelines⁸. In Duncairn Gardens, a street which divides the New Lodge and Tiger's Bay neighbourhoods in North Belfast, peaceline works had a been a source of dispute between the NIO and the Catholic community from New Lodge. Interviews with the community group leader from the New Lodge Community Forum and a press review were used to trace the decision-making process. The elected representatives (the local councillor and the Member of the Local Assembly), together with the community workers of the area, met with NIO officials regarding these works. The first project presented by the NIO in September 1998 provided for a simple renovation of the security gates. These proposals did not satisfy the local representatives and a deal was struck to call upon Community Technical Aid (CTA) to draw the plans. This shows that the local community group was strong enough to oppose the government agencies. CTA is a non-governmental organization whose objective is to provide assistance on urban and architectural issues to community groups. CTA proposed a decorative pattern made of bricks and ironwork. This new structure would improve the image of the area without compromising residents' security. In the architect's view, such a structure is “very violent” because “a wall is a wall”, but it is possible to “invest a wall with expression and art”⁹. The NIO followed CTA's recommendations but refused to entrust it with the implementation of the project, which the CTA architect regretted and interpreted as a means of keeping control. Nine months of negotiation were then needed for the different stakeholders to approve the

⁸ Housing Policy Assistant Director, NIHE – interview, June 14th, 1999.

⁹ CTA architect – interview, June 17th, 1999.

plans. Work was due to begin in September 1999; however, according to my observations, work only began in February 2000. In the picture, the old security gate is still in place. (Figure 13). I photographed the final result in June 2001 (Figure 14).



Fig. 13. Security gate, Lepper Street/Duncairn Gardens, view from Duncairn Gardens, before renovation (February 10th, 2000) © F. Ballif.



Fig. 14. Security gate, Lepper Street/Duncairn Gardens, view from Duncairn Gardens, after renovation (June 2nd, 2001) © F. Ballif.

Photographs are inevitably subject to certain prejudices and necessarily select only part of the reality. As Becker states, “the photographers known perfectly well that the pictures represent a small and highly selected sample of the real world about which they are supposed to be conveying some truth. They know that their selection of times, places, and people, of distance and angles, of framing and tonality, have all combined to produce an effect quite different from the one a different selection from the same reality would produce.” (Becker 1986, p. 273). My photographs show a partial or even biased picture of the urban spaces I shot. For instance, I took the pictures of the peace walls with the idea that they had the effect of enclosing urban space. The photographs thus accentuate this notion. One of them shows a gate in the foreground with a view of a wall running alongside the road and merging into the hills on the horizon, which reinforces the visual effect of a massive and imposing structure (Figure 15).



Fig. 15. Springmartin Road, peaceline and security gate (March 3rd, 2000) © F. Ballif.

An “off-the-wall” presence: the camera as mediator

My photographs are peculiar as, in most of cases, they represent places where people are absent. The principal objective of this photographic work was to produce a collection of images to mirror the discourses of the stakeholders (police and planners) without the end users, residents or passers-by. I wanted to picture the artefacts that resulted from public decisions. The people in charge of building or maintaining them do not appear either, because I was not there at the time of their intervention. As is often the case with public space, we do

not see those who produce it. The locations concerned were not very busy and, with a few exceptions, I did not take any pictures representing passers-by. These areas were residential, close to neighbourhood boundaries materialized by walls where, even when crossing is possible (where a gate has been installed or the wall is not continuous), residents rarely went over to “the other side”, through fear or unease (Shuttleworth 2005). Social life is also more focused towards the inside of sectarian neighbourhoods (Boal 2008). Moreover, the Northern Irish climate is not particularly clement, which means that people generally stay indoors, except during the summer. Nevertheless, these spaces are not completely empty: children play out, residents pass by and, in recent years, more and more tourists have been coming to visit troubled areas in search of a thrill.

Being in little-used outdoor spaces offers a great deal of freedom in terms of access and the use of the camera. No authorization or prior agreement is necessary to take pictures (although the publication of images could be restricted by image rights for people or buildings). Where peacelines abut military barracks or police stations, which is not very common, it is prohibited to take photographs, but this rule is rarely applied in the absence of guards. The question of access to the field (as for a factory, a police station, a dance hall, etc.) and the right to take pictures is therefore not explicitly raised. Nevertheless, taking pictures is not particularly comfortable. Personally, I did not feel totally at ease – partly because, in these residential areas, I was immediately identified as an outsider, but also because the emotional charge of these places is strong: they bear the marks of state or sectarian violence, and of death. Memorials to local victims or gardens of remembrance in the vicinity of the peacelines have proliferated in the last ten years, created and maintained by local community associations or ex-prisoners’ groups (McDowell 2008).

Being there, on the social margins of residential spaces identified with a particular community – with or without a camera – was therefore slightly uncomfortable. I had the impression of being an intruder, of not being in my place here. This was a question not of access but rather of needing to justify my presence, even if passers-by paid little attention to me. Children provoked interaction, in which I was asked to explain what I was doing there. The camera then became a mediator to negotiate my presence and to continue the conversation. On numerous occasions, I encountered small groups of children, aged about ten, playing in the street in the summer, close to the peacelines. I did not intend to take any pictures of them, because I did not want to “steal” any images of them, and also because I was not interested in such photographs. But the children, out of curiosity, would initiate contact to find out what I was doing there. Then, without exception, they would ask me to take a picture of them. I accepted, and this produced other types of pictures – posed photographs that were not taken at my instigation (Figure 16); I complied with requests for “souvenir” photography. As Sylvaine Conord (2002) notes, “the photographer [...] defines at the moment of the shooting a way of showing certain aspects of the observed reality”¹⁰ (Terrenoire, 1985, p. 515). “The subject(s) on the photographs intervenes sometimes in the making of the image, by the staging of the self produced in front of the camera lens,

¹⁰ Citation translated from French by the author.

principally designed to control the manner of *showing* oneself.” As my research object was not the daily practices in this space, I did not use these images. The conversations with these children provided some information about the way they visualized the social space and enabled me to understand the territorial complexities of their neighbourhood. One day, I met a group of three little girls who asked me the usual questions. After two of them had already headed home, the third insisted I go with her for a little walk. I followed her to the end of a small street, and after a few metres she stopped and said that we could go no further than the street corner because “it’s protestant”. No visible sign marked the limit. In this moment, I experienced the invisible boundaries that define the sectarian neighbourhoods of inner-city Belfast. She then took me to the nearby park, which is divided by a steel fence. She insisted I take a picture of her on the parapet of a bridge in the park (Figure 17). I asked her for her email address to send her the photographs, because I felt indebted for the trust she granted me spontaneously, and I felt an obligation to “give back” these photographs to her.

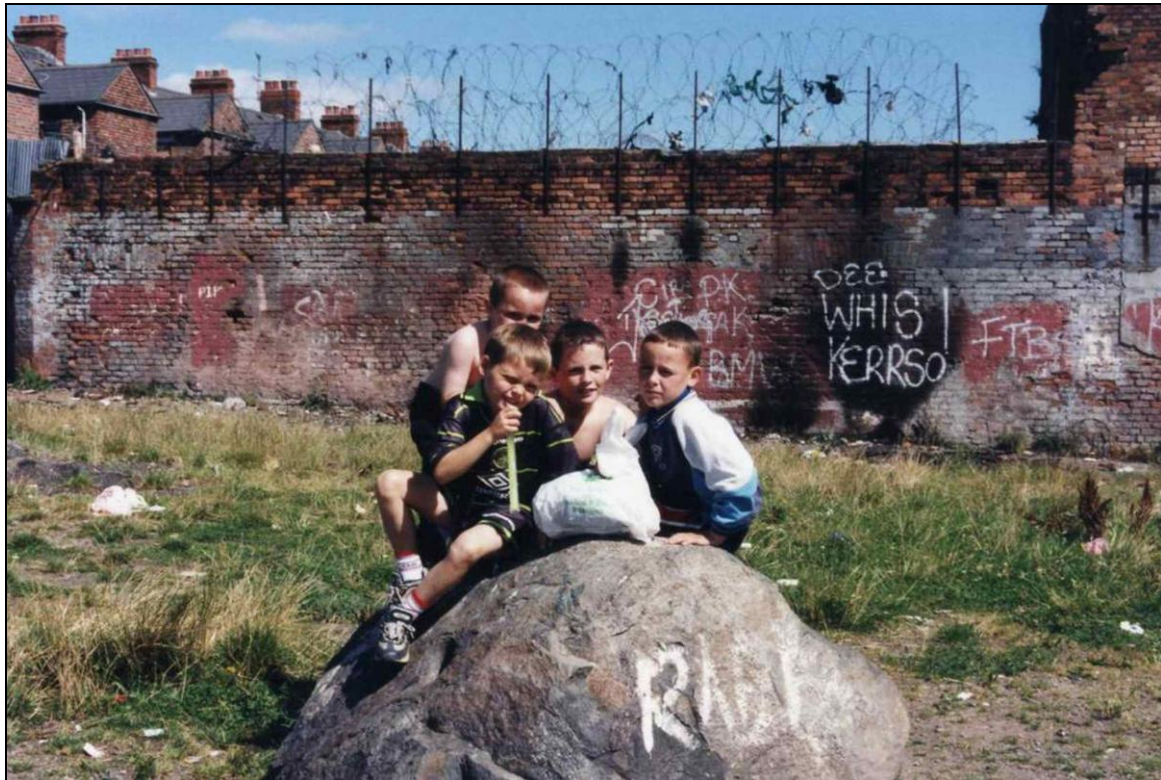


Fig. 16. Children, Manor Street (August 1999) © F. Ballif.



Figure 17. Girl on the bridge parapet, Alexandra Park (August 1999) © Florine Ballif.

To conclude: can photographs be “neutral”?

At the start of my research, I had a naïve desire to avoid “making art” with my photographs (something of which I would not be capable anyway). Indeed, according to Becker “Insofar as the artistic intention interferes with the photograph’s evidentiary use, it does so by affecting the selection and presentation of details, so that some things are not shown, some details are emphasized at the expense of others and thus suggest relationships and conclusions without actually giving good cause for believing them, and by presenting details in such a way (through manipulation of lighting or the style of printing, for instance) as to suggest one mood rather than another. Since every way of making a photograph, whether for artistic purposes or for presentation as evidence in a courtroom, does all of these things, there is a problem, but it is one every user of photographs has.” (Becker 1986, p. 285-86). Mostly, I had the intention not to provoke emotion, and to produce pictures that were “neutral” on the emotional level. Barthes (1980), in his famous essay, insists on the difference between *studium* and *punctum*; the first term characterizes meaning and general study, while the second refers to the sensitive dimensions, to details that attract attention and to significant anecdotes that break with the unity of the image. It is wrong to say that one is restricted to academic research and the other to art and journalism; nevertheless, the public tends to engage with photography according to these broad lines of analysis. These considerations thus guided my choices in framing and selecting the images for my thesis, by trying to show “ordinary” pictures that are plainly, if not poorly, composed (Figure 18). This “poor” aesthetic seemed to me all the more necessary given that the existence of the walls was

morally reprehensible (as it reflected the failure of society and the authorities to build a good city) in the minds of the stakeholders I interviewed.



Fig. 18. Peaceline, Springfield Park, behind the police station (March 3rd, 2000) © F. Ballif.

A picture “works” in relation to its iconographic surroundings (Terrenoire, 1985). My immediate references for these sites were pictures taken by local professional photographers,¹¹ including those of Frankie Quinn. These were useful in determining the kinds of images that I did not want to create, with the aim of producing more methodical research photos. I therefore also composed my photos by keeping in mind (and avoiding reproducing) the published work I knew from Frankie Quinn (1994), in particular a black-and-white portfolio in the humanist photographic tradition. I also discovered Frédéric Sautereau’s work a little later.

Quinn’s photographs, in my opinion, grab the viewer’s attention with an architectural detail or the presence of a person. For instance, the man riding a bike alongside the wall in Cupar Way gives a great intensity to the picture (see the photo n. 9 in the web page <http://www.frankiequinn.com/gallery/c/gallerysample.htm>). By contrast, the image I selected of this location is much more static (Figure 2). In my photographs, I deliberately excluded passers-by to avoid emotion, or I photographed them from a distance so as to

¹¹ Associated at the time with the Belfast Exposed gallery: www.belfastexposed.org.

depersonalize or deindividualize their presence and focus rather on the information they convey. The figure of a mother with a pram or pushchair is common in Belfast's working-class areas. Quinn framed his photographs from above, highlighting the fence which runs along the street. The women and pushchairs, viewed head-on from above, contrast with the bleak landscape on the right-hand side (see the photo n. 9 in the web page <http://www.frankiequinn.com/gallery/c/gallerysample.htm>). In my photograph, on the other hand, the single, discreet figure (and her pram) is there merely to indicate the scale of the wall, which, furthermore, has been “normalized” and integrated into the urban space (Figure 19). In Manor Street, following a clearance operation, only one house remained. The owner of this house refused to move. It was nicknamed the “Little House on the Prairie” by the locals. Quinn photographed it by framing its occupier on the threshold (<http://www.frankiequinn.com/gallery/c/gallerysample.htm>). Sautereau composed his image in nearly the same way, but without anyone present (Figure 20); the house then became uninhabited, converted into a youth club for the area. Another picture, on the contrary, shows a neighbourhood resident in the foreground, reinforcing the strangeness of the house (Figure 21).

I photographed the house from a greater distance, so as to take the urban context into account, with the child that can just about be distinguished in the foreground testifying to the use of the place by residents (Figure 22). The house is unoccupied: it would subsequently be demolished to make way for the neighbourhood's renewal project. The pictures by the professional photographers adopt a different perspective and goal, and are of better quality, but as documents they provide information similar to mine – indeed, they show even more. These pictures by Frankie Quinn and Frédéric Sautereau may capture the viewer's attention with what may appear to be anecdotal details, in fact present characters who reveal the tensions or contradictions resulting from the presence of the walls, which is exactly what I, too, sought to document. It is the systematic gesture of producing series of pictures from every angle, zooming in on the materials used or on details of the walls, that sets my photographs apart as research images, rather than their aspiration to an aesthetic of “neutrality”. Indeed, the rejection of a supposedly “artistic” aesthetic in this way is oversimplistic and misplaced – not least when one considers that documentary photographers often adopt an uncluttered frontal style that echoes researchers' concerns.



Fig. 19. Security wall, view from Mountpottinger Road, Short Strand (June 4th, 2001) © F. Ballif.



Fig. 20. Manor Street wall, July 1997, extract from *Of Wall and Lives* © F. Sautereau.

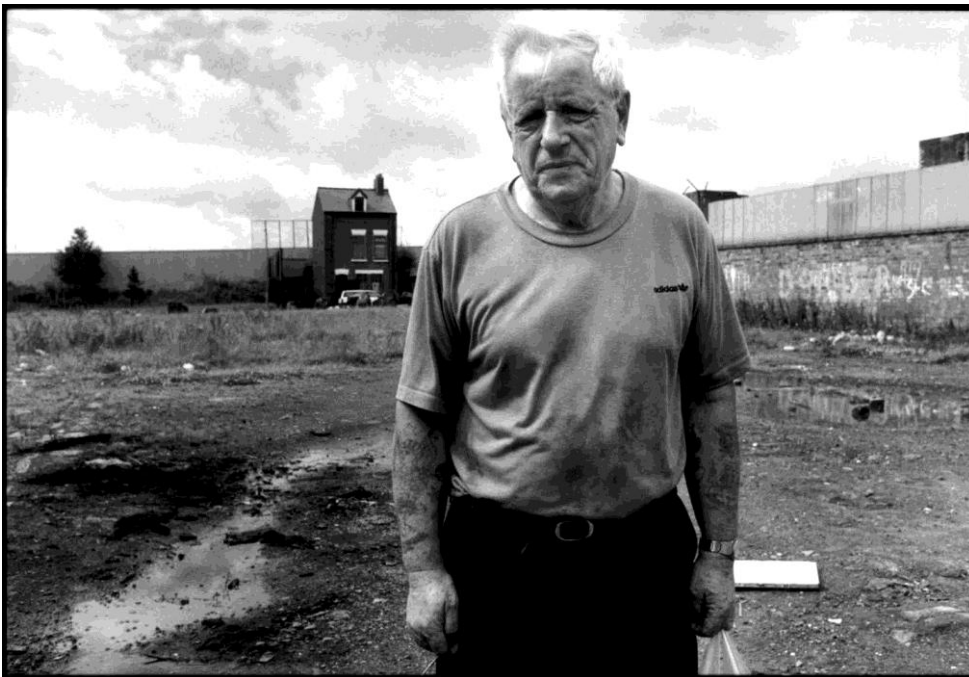


Fig. 21. Manor Street wall, July 1997 (2), extract from *Of Wall and Lives* © F. Sautereau.



Fig. 22. Manor Street, peaceline and the “Little House on the Prairie” (March 1999) © F. Ballif.

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Irène Jonas

Independent sociologist and photographer

Jean-François Noël

Photographer

Chilean exile seen from « the inside »... 40 years on.

Abstract

In our research project, entitled "At the heart of the city: analysing the pulse of the Plaça de Catalunya in Barcelona" and financed by the Inventory of Ethnological Heritage of Catalonia (IPEC), which belongs to the Department of Culture of the Catalan government, the question of images and sounds was central. After our fieldwork, the question of how to present our work arose; we did not want to do it through text alone. The idea then was gradually born of the multimedia format presented here, which is part of a more general reflection on the attention to be paid to sounds and images for the analysis and understanding of contemporary urban life.

Keywords

Exile, Chile, Decoration pictures Photographs, Domestic space

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Jean-François Noël

He is photographer since 60s. Trained in geography and history, he is an activist. His work aims to safeguard the memories of time and spaces in an ephemeral world. He works also on humanity (no-still portraits, street photography, reportages, events, etc.) and its environment, almost on landscapes.. Currently is independent photographer for the association *Regarde!* Personal exhibitions: « Géométries urbaines » (Massy, 2007), « Espèces d'Espaces en Essonne » (2012 – Archives Départementales), « La Grande-Borne aux beaux jours » (Grigny 2013). Directeur du projet "¡ Presentes ! portraits d'exilés chiliens" (2013 - Association Regarde! pour le Conseil Général de l'Essonne).



© Irène Jonas

To celebrate the 40 year-anniversary of Pinochet's coup in Chile, the French association "Regarde!"¹ has initiated a study in visual sociology with 25 Chilean political exiles who have decided to stay in France after the return of democracy². Our approach consisted in using photography as a research tool (Chauvin, Reix 2013). Coupled with images, sociology has become both an observation method instrumented by visual recording tools (here photo cameras) and a way to disseminate the results of the study by relying on visual resources: hoardings with texts and photographs, DVD, catalogue, etc. This paper deals more particularly with the individual and family memory and explores the issue of exile through the observation of the domestic space and the Chilean objects adorning it.

The domestic space is a social construction based on a specific organisation and on the marks left therein by the inhabitants. This marking, operating through objects arrangements or interventions on the inhabited space, corresponds to the most important material aspect of space appropriation. Surreptitiously, the past sneaks into daily life objects and imposes a memory to us. As repositories of the identity, of the heritage, of family memories, all the objects crystallise forms of investment (Debray, Turgeon 2007). As emphasised by Philippe Bonnin (2006), the home plays this particular role, both as a stage and as enactment of domestic life. "The appearance built by the masters of the place seeks to reveal a meaning, elaborated in this permanent arrangement/invention of the personal world; it is somehow the projection of a story and an ideal of life; it is to a certain extent a microcosmic provision of the world, which is almost cosmologic" (Bonnin 2006 : 13). Beyond simple marking and personalisation, if we consider the relation with the inhabitant and its habitat as the project of integrating the inhabited space to the social construction of self, the home of the encountered Chileans has thrown a light on the successive steps of exile, the settlement in France and the feeling of being torn today between two countries and two histories.

Methodology

During that research, we have met 25 people³. As political militant(s) or sympathiser(s), men like women, all of them supported the Allende government and had to go into exile between 1973 and 1976. Their life conditions under the military dictatorship⁴, the ways they left Chile, their exile itineraries and tribulations constitute as many unique stories. In the face of the urgency of the situation, choosing the host country may have resulted from a desire as much as

¹ "Regarde !" means "Look !" in English. Dobrivoje Arsenijevic (Arsa), Jean-François Noël and Irène Jonas are members of the Association.

² This work was commissioned by the General Council of the French Departement of Essonne for the 40 years' anniversary of the Coup in Chile. A first diffusion of that study has been designed and presented in the form of a mobile exhibition "¡ presentes !" and of a catalogue including texts on the exile itineraries and of photographic portraits, a larger publication project is in progress.

³ The people whom we have met came either from Chilean couples who had gone into exile together or from Chilean or mixed couples who had formed in France. Four children of exiled were also interviewed.

⁴ Life underground, imprisonments, tortures, internment in concentration camp.

from a selection by default (according to the refusal of other embassies) or an opportunity. There were successive exile waves, most often in Argentina, some eventually arriving in France.

To come in contact with Chileans, we have not used any relay of institutional type, nor even of associative nature. We found that the better way to work in a trusting relationship, was to start with Chilean exiles whom we knew. Jean-François Noël thus visited everybody systematically to introduce our approach, prepare the interview, make the visual tool accepted and collect other addresses. At first, the project often met with reluctance: "why do you want to talk about us? We are exiled, not heroes". Possibly a little distrust: "what is the purpose of this project?" These questions reflected not only the fear, more or less verbalised, to awaken or reopen a never-healed wound, but also a certain restraint with respect to parents and friends who died or "disappeared" and were no longer there to testify.

Once convinced of the merits of this approach, these people were the speakers and the guarantees of our project with their friends, with whom they placed us in contact. The quality of the recommendation and of the first meeting was decisive to obtain the participation of people whom we did not know. A preliminary and sometimes long exchange conducted with each of the people enabled to overcome the fears and the reluctances. We could also agree on the interest of our project to pass on their story and the values of their involvement with Allende's Chile. They welcomed the idea of addressing collective history through life stories, often by calling upon their family, spouse and (especially) children. Going public was not an easy task and that included bringing, even reluctantly, their family and friends into the limelight and thereby divulging a shared story. All of them accepted to take part in this project and were happy to give their testimonies and photos⁵, thereby accepting to "become visible" through words as well as through images.

The photographic act is a communication act, involving the investigated/ photographed people as much as us, researchers/photographers. The photographic approach of the researcher is from then on an aware experience, in which the investigated lend themselves to play with their own image (Meyer 2008). The reciprocal trust established before shooting the photos and our way of proceeding enabled us not to "steal" the pictures, which were somehow given, possibly suggested, to the photographers.

Thanks to the meetings organised before the interviews, three of us could visit people's homes. In a first step, Irène Jonas conducted the interview and Jean-François Noël made *in situ* shots. In a second step, after having listened to and taken part in the interview, Dobrivoje Arsenijevic (Arsa) shot 6/6 argentic black and white portraits intended for the exhibition and the

⁵ The semi-directive interviews lasted between two and four hours and were structured around three periods of their life: their life in Chile and their engagement at the time of Allende; their exile itinerary between the 11th of September and their arrival in France; their life in France and the evolution of their relation to Chile.

catalogue⁶. A third step of the research consisted in complementary questions and shots of the "Chilean traces" in the household. These photographs were realised by Jean-François Noël and Irène Jonas, either with 24/36 or a Smartphone. Just like for the "Presentes" exhibition and the catalogue, the selection of black and white was favoured all at once, especially for portraits. However, we chose to illustrate certain households with two or three colour snapshots which, according to us, accounted better for the profusion of Chilean objects.

After every meeting, we took a little time to discuss each other's work and the conditions under which it unfolded. This discussion enabled us to readjust our *modi operandi* in order to avoid disquieting interferences between us, but also to implement research in a truly collective manner.

The Chilean exile

The Chilean exile constitutes, like others, an off-site experience, emphasised by the disruption of an initial state, offering a kind of symbiosis between the human being and the territory, the family, the ancestors. This very strong link with the soil, here described by Pablo Neruda, was palpable in many interviews:

I think that a man should live in his country and I believe that uprooting for the human being is a frustration which, one way or the other, atrophies the clarity of his soul. I can only live on my native soil, I cannot live without laying my feet and hands on it, without sticking my ear to it, without feeling the flow of its waters and its shadows, without perceiving how my roots seek in my slit the material substances (Neruda 1987 : 252).

⁶ For Arsa, these images were also part of a continuous photographic work, conducted for several years: "Destinies of exiles".



Julio showing us the Chilean tree of fire that he planted in the garden of his house © Irène Jonas

Every exile thus imposes the construction of a new daily life in which the migrant should both find his bearings with respect to the host society and re-create, from afar, his links with the country of origin. However, it seems important to describe the specific aspects of the Chilean exile. Chile was not a country of emigration, although only transborder, but the military coup of 11 September 1973 triggered a massive political emigration. The scope of that exodus matched the brutality of the break-up of the political system implemented by Salvador Allende (Popular Unity) and the intensity of the repression. In a generalised context of professional purges, of arrests, of tortures, of imprisonment in concentration camps and of "disappearances", going into exile appeared as the sole possible "choice" (Bolzman 2002).

For most of them, the Chilean exiles left at best with a suitcase, at worst with only the clothes they were wearing. Most of them refused to accept exile as a final situation, possibly even

in the middle term, so that the issue of the return was central in their lives. "In this perspective, they turned a provisory situation into a true way of life. According to the now conventional expression, 'they live with their suitcases at the foot of their beds'" (Bolzman 2006). During their first years in France, Chile mostly existed for them through their political commitment to denounce the military regime and to show solidarity with the opponents. This first period of exile was described by Claudio Bolzman (1989) as a one of uprooting and politicisation. For Maribel who got married to Juan Carlos while he was in jail, and then went into exile with him: "We came here to organise the resistance, we were only passing by. We stayed several years with the strict minimum in the flat". The aspirations and activities of the different refugees was then reflected in their daily militancy, with a project of returning home, thereby neglecting the furniture or objects of their household which they saw as a transient camping site.

As years went by, the stabilisation of the military regime and the absence of organised internal resistance made any return inconceivable. The necessity to integrate themselves at least professionally and the birth of children made them set progressively targets that could be locally fulfilled. Maria-Helena, who left Chile with her husband wanted by the military junta, sees the birth of her children as a light bulb experience: "When I had my daughter, I realised that my life was now here, it was not in Chile any longer and I was in charge of others". Francisco, who had the guardianship of his children in Chile and had to wait several years before he could bring them to France: "At the onset, it was the fight against Pinochet, then it was the children, who had to be raised and the family had to be integrated correctly in French society". Some Chileans continued their militant or associative activity in France: "When we understood that returning meant to be shot, we realised that we could be useful in our country of residence and we joined the French Socialist Party". In the late 1980s, the Chilean border opened, but those we have met are not *retornados*⁷. Jose and Loretta, who went into exile with a toddler and a newborn baby, considered, as a majority of Chileans close to retirement or already pensioners, that life could only be contemplated if they were surrounded by their children and grandchildren: "The children have grown, we have now grandchildren, years went by and it has become more difficult to go back".

As emphasised by Fanny Jelicki, the Chilean exiles had been torn brutally and against their will, banned from their native land, so that the country was frozen in their minds in a kind of fantasmagory where reconstructed memories and ideal projections were intertwined. "Nostalgia is the corollary of the impossible grieving work caused by the departure. Country of a childhood gone forever, of the younger years, of the euphoria of the Popular Unity crystallising memory, Chile is adorned with thousand virtues (...). In exile it takes on a culinary form, as in the decoration, the language spoken home, what is transmitted to the children in the community

⁷ As of 1984, a first publication of *listas* gives the name of people authorised to return to Chile. After the victory of Patricio Alwyn, the candidate of the opposition during the December 1989 elections and his accession to the presidency of the Republic in March 1990, all the Chilean exiles could make their way or return to live in Chile. The *retornados* designate those who return to Chile and stayed.

activities" (Jedlicki 2007: 55). Many featured "Chile" in their home, aware that it was impossible to return to their country of origin and that it was necessary to integrate themselves in France. What traces of Chile can then be found in the homes of Chileans, forty years on after exile?



© Irène Jonas

Chile at home

Give or take three exceptions, we met the interviewees in their own homes. Many of them offered us to stay longer so as to share *empanadas*⁸ before or after our work. In the lounge where we were entertained, at the crossroads between public and private lives, many traces of Chile can be found, more or less ostentatiously. When these traces had not been mentioned spontaneously by the interviewees, we asked them to show us where they had placed objects from Chile, kept testimonies of the time and/or family photos so as to enrich the iconographic work as well as the emergence of memories. We produced images that would help us interpret how signs of exile were still visible in the habitat almost 40 years later.

Given the conditions of the exile, the posters of the Popular Unity, the paintings made by Chilean artists, the books, the artisanal objects or the souvenirs which adorn the apartments or which are grouped in what they call their "Chilean hideout or room" are not (or quite exceptionally) elements they brought from Chile with them. As emphasised by José: "All you can see here is a reconstruction, I left Chile just with a suitcase". For most of them, these objects do not constitute in this sense "exile objects" which would have been chosen as the most precious to take away. A single example was reported, which was somehow close to this case. When he was released from the concentration camp where he had confined since 1974, Oscar, one of the creators of the Aleph theatre in the favelas, made his way to the airport under the protection of the French embassy.

"When I arrived at the airport, I had a mate, the son of General Schneider⁹, who was waiting for me with a gift-wrapped package, closed like a balloon. He told: 'I think it's quite cold in Europe'. I opened the package, it was General Schneider's coat. I then used it in a theatre play called "the exile Mateluna" and the General's jacket accompanied me throughout the exile".

For the researcher, the indoors photographs interestingly offer a memorisation of multiple material (decorative objects, images associated with beliefs - such as those of miraculous rabbis - souvenirs) or more subjective elements (atmospheres, enactments), useful to the understanding of the lifestyles of the population studied. In this sense, the "decorative figures" display an encoded language and the reproductions, photos or objects arranged by the inhabitants reflect their tastes, their past, their memories and their hopes. Three types of decorative figures associated with Chile can be put in evidence in the homes of the Chileans whom we met in the Parisian area: the "militant figures", the "artistic and artisanal figures" and the "intimate figures". The "artistic or artisanal" figures (paintings and/or traditional objects on the walls or the furniture) are mainly present in the common areas (lounge, living-room, kitchen, corridors) and

⁸ *Empanadas* are small meat-stuffed turnovers. They are a typical Chilean dish.

⁹ Chilean general Rene Schneider was assassinated in 1970 by a group of officers, shortly after he pledged himself to respect the democratic process of president Salvador Allende.

more rarely in the rooms. The "militant figures" and the "intimate figures" are essentially grouped in a single room (bedroom or study) dedicated to them in whole or in part. The variations in location are due to different factors: the size of the dwelling, the composition of the family (Chilean couples, mixed couples), the degree of militant activity, the intensity of returns to Chile and the relationship maintained with the country today.

The militant figures

The "militant figures" include in almost all the homes of exiled Chileans the photographic or stylised portraits of Salvador Allende and of Pablo Neruda (see photos below).



© Irène Jonas

The choice to keep a photo or a drawing of the face of Salvador Allende is by no means irrelevant.

"We are the fruit of a political history which unfortunately failed but which is rich in lessons regarding the struggle for a more egalitarian, more interconnected, fairer, more democratic society. This is what Allende taught us and we paid the price for it".

For everyone, he represented an enormous hope of social justice and he is still the symbol of the arrival of the left to power through the democratic path:

"Allende's thinking, the Popular Unity, are still talking to us today. Allende was not an extremist, he was a humanist, a pacifist who wanted to change the Chilean society to go towards a fairer society through democracy, in legality and by respecting others".

He also kept an image of integrity and of fidelity to his engagements:

"President Allende embarked on a programme that he respected and that he kept to the very end. He wanted to eradicate slums, build correct dwellings for everybody... We placed all our hope in President Allende". For Edicto, "It is not Pinochet's dictatorship and torture who would have made me forget my ideas. On the contrary, 40 years after the coup and the death of comrade Allende, his ideas are more active and solid than ever" (see photo below).



© Jean-François Noël

These portraits can be framed under glass and pinned on a wall or placed on a shelf without a frame. They are sometimes side by side the family photos. At Maribel and Juan-Carlos' home, a portrait of Salvador Allende, a drawing of Pablo Neruda and a few current family photos can be seen on a shelf in the dining-room.



© Irène Jonas

Not surprisingly the family photos and Allende's portrait are side by side. If exile is often implicitly associated with the grief of the lost fatherland or of the lost family, the nostalgia of the previous golden age, the past conditions, designates Chile both as the country of the missing childhood and younger years, but also as the country where a political project was murdered. Loss of their native soil, loss of the family, annihilation of the Popular Unity and death of

Salvador Allende are part of the same grieving process. Francisco explains the arrangement of the photographs above the door of his study:

"My father is in the middle, there are two photos of Allende on the left, and you can see my mother with my brother and me on the right. Allende gave us enormous hope, so Allende has a place here. When I made political campaigns in Chile, we would visit houses on the hills of Valparaiso where the ground was made of earth, there was not even a proper floor, but even in these poor families, there were portraits of Allende, not a portrait like here, but posters. Allende was present in the poorest houses of Chile, one could almost say that he was worshipped. He knew how to talk to the people" (see photo below).



© Irène Jonas

The coup and the military dictatorship that ensued are the only causes for being torn from their land and their family as well as for seeing their hopes and their commitments for a fairer society annihilated. Just like Salvador Allende and Pablo Neruda, their next of kin and their progeny were the victims of that violence. Moreover, for many of them, as they were not allowed

to return to Chile, they could not visit their ageing parents or attend the funerals of family members. Maria Teresa thus describes the pain of her first trip to Chile: "This first return to Chile was awful because I had nothing but my mother's tomb to go to". The political struggle and the pain of exile remain extremely present for the next generation and is reflected by posters or photographs of Salvador Allende and Pablo Neruda exposed in the bedroom. Mauricio was four years old at the time of the coup, when his mother had to flee in 1974. He stayed with his maternal grandparents for five years until his mother had the means to bring him to France with his brother:

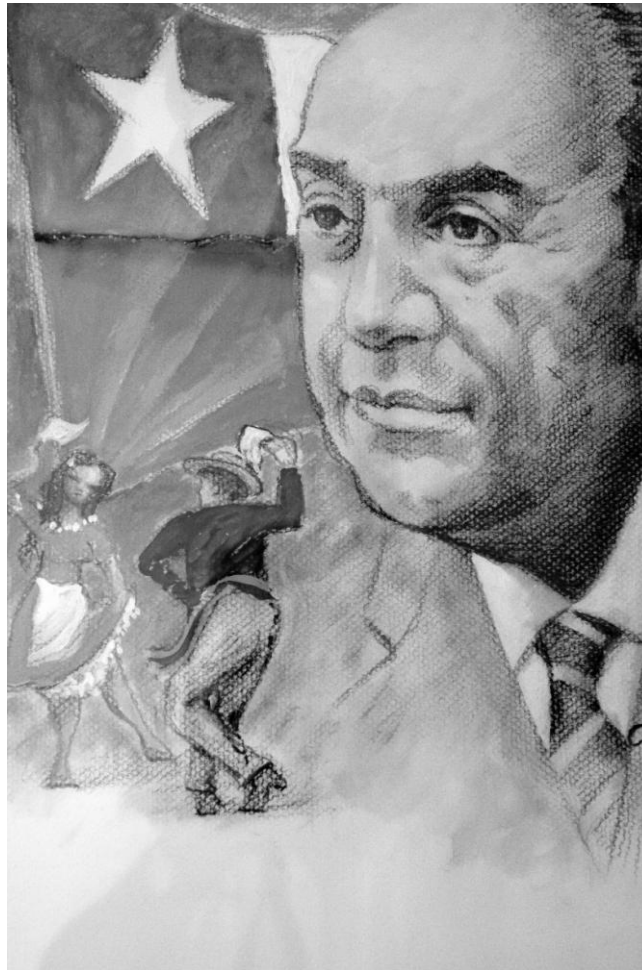
"This coup took a kind of innocence away from me, a life which goes without saying when you're a kid and you live in a stable society. The dictatorship took this portion of youth, of innocence away from me, to the extent that my mother had to leave, and then again, took my grandparents and the soil of Chile away from me". Andres, his half-brother who was born in France, became aware of his parents' history at a very early age: "I remember in school, we played children's games. With magic swords, we had to fight against the evil one whom I had called Pinochet. And everybody screamed "Pinochet must die". I was already aware that there was an evil man who had harmed my parents" (see photo below).



© Irène Jonas

The poet Pablo Neruda, the Nobel literature prize-winner in 1971, also occupies a central place in Chilean life, all the more so since the conditions of his death are still suspicious¹⁰. Photos or drawings of him can often be found in Chilean homes:

"It was a poster made for a Chilean celebration. It was drawn by a Communist Chilean exiled painter/sculptor, now deceased. He also realised a stele of Salvador Allende in Massy" (see photo below).



© Jean-François Noë

¹⁰ It was only in 2011 that an investigation was opened into the circumstance surrounding the death of the poet Pablo Neruda. His remains were exhumed in April 2013 so that justice could determine whether he actually died of cancer as claimed by the official version or whether he was murdered.

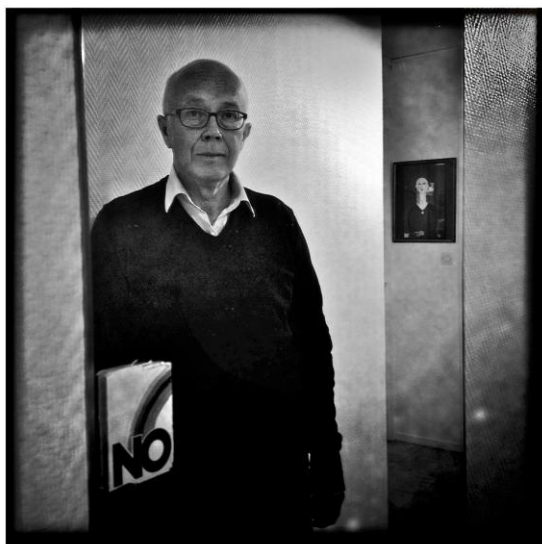
The militant figures also include two types of posters, the Chilean posters from the time of Allende and the posters of supporting events to Chile they conducted in France. Julio chose to pose in the living-room amidst his posters, among that of the "hope lives on" festival organised in Paris by the Chilean associations for the 100 years of the birth of Salvador Allende.

Erasmus showed us one of his preferred posters, that he has placed on his desk, opposite to the Chilean flag: it is entitled "memoria visual" and refers to the Popular Unity (see photo below).



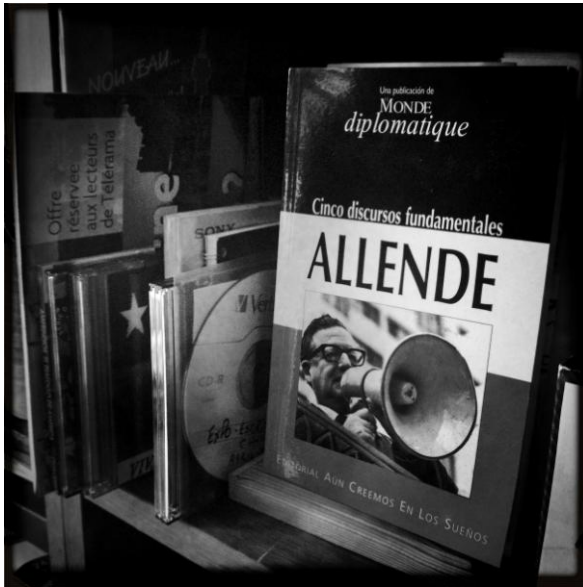
© Jean-François Noël

More recently, the little poster of the film "No" by Pablo Larain can also be seen in the homes, with reference to the "No" of the 1988 referendum during which the Chileans had refused a new presidential mandate to Augusto Pinochet (see photos below)



© Irène Jonas

Finally, we cannot overlook the numerous bookshelves packed with Marxist writings in Spanish, poems of Pablo Neruda, analyses on Latin America and books or films about Chile. The presence of a bookcase in most flats of the Chilean exiles is no coincidence, since many intellectuals and artists found refuge in France. However, among the Chilean exiled and alongside young individuals, politically engaged in the Popular Unity and having a real (sometimes significant) academic capital, there are also militant persons from poor families. They benefited "from the fundamental principles of cultural activism to promote the access of popular masses to art, to literature and to means of communication and of diffusion", established under Allende as soon as in 1970, or from the popular educational work of their political parties. Imprisonment with élites of the Popular Unity sometimes also replaced academic training. In exile, some people continued their cultural development, which they considered essential for their political dignity. The bookcase is the best testimony of that inclination (see photo below).



© Irène Jonas

Sergio arrived in France after having passed through the hands of the Dina¹¹ and got away from them miraculously. As an executive of the Socialist Party, he had taken part in 1972 in the creation of the Social Party' school of executives. In addition to an immense bookcase covering a wall of the lounge, he arranged a very small windowless space where he now keeps archives and documents. Since 1993, a date on which he published his first book, he has been writing his political books on Chile and also short stories and poetic prose in this space (see photo below).



© Irène Jonas

Edicto grew up in a very modest and illiterate family on the island of Chiloe in Patagonia and was first a shepherd.

¹¹ The Dina was Pinochet's military police.

"We were living under miserable conditions, but I never conceded defeat, I wanted to learn again and again. I did not study much and I have been through the university of life. I was working and reading at the same time".

Under the Popular Unity, he took on responsibilities as one of the officials in charge of the Communist Party for the region of Magallanes. Even if he is now retired, books have never left him and he is still writing collections of poems (see photo below).



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The artisanal and artistic figures

The « artistic or artisanal figures » such as paintings or artisanal objects are also quite numerous. As we have already emphasised, the artisanal objects did not leave Chile together with the exiled. They received them from their families when they had the means to come to France or they brought them back from their trips to Chile. As it was possible to circulate between the two countries again freely in the 1980s, there were more family exchanges, circulations of objects or family souvenirs.

"It depends on the social level of the family, but it was a two-stage process. Some families had the means to come and visit the political refugees here, as in my case. My father has

often visited us and every time, he would bring me gifts from Chile, a painting, an object, things made of copper and the house started to fill up little by little. After the 17 years of travel prohibition, most of us went to Chile and we would go to craftsmanship markets. Craftsmanship had developed quite a lot over there with all these people forced to unemployment by the dictatorship, they simply lived off that. Buying objects from them was a way to show our solidarity, because we bought many useless artefacts and we gave many things to friends on our return to Paris."

Every object refers to a place, to a trip to Chile:

"I had these little coffees produced by an artisan over there. I saw that he was making things and I asked him whether I could order special items: "you will do it for me". He told me "Of course, what should I put?" Café Don Pancho, Café Valparaíso, café Pablo Neruda. I have not forgotten that he lived in the same street as I was. Later on, I made little characters who looked like me to entertain my grandchildren when they visited us" (see photo below).



© Jean-François Noël

Some of these objects rather relate to potteries, others to weavings, others still to Mapuches craftsmanship. It depends on the exiles' origins as shown by Arauco on the following photograph (see photos below).



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In the flat of Francisco, born in 1935 and militant in the Chilean Socialist Party since the age of 15 years, the walls of the dining-room and of the study are covered with paintings of his town of origin.

"I used to live on that hill, there you can see the Valparaiso market, this church is the oldest in the town, it is called "The Matrix". I used to live in this house on the hill. Because my father had been unemployed, he was also persecuted, so we hid far away in the hill".

Compelled to go underground immediately after the coup, he had a chaotic exile from Peru, via Romania, to finally arrive in France and continue a militant activity in the Chilean Socialist Party and in the French Socialist Party. After 17 years in exile, he went back to Chile for the first time when his name disappeared from the wanted lists:

"This painting there depicts a scene in the south of Chile. It was my brother who offered it to me the first time I could return to Chile. It has been made by the painter who was also the art teacher of the daughters of my brother. He was also a friend of mine. This painting there was made by the same painter, but it was him who offered it to me during my second trip, it is even signed and I could buy this one myself. There are many souvenirs of my country of origin" (see photo below).



© Irène Jonas

The intimate figures

Finally, the "intimate figures" refer to the family: they are photographs or objects. The old photo camera which belonged to Patricio's father and which he brought to France the day he was authorised to return to Chile is the only object standing on a tray in the dining-room. Andres, born of exiled Chilean parents who met in France, had kept his grandfather's hat carefully in his bedroom. It was the sole object he had brought back from a country in which he had never lived but which was nevertheless part of his life:

"When I was a teenager, I went back on my own and I landed in a country which is mine but not totally mine and I was lucky to spend a little more than a month with my paternal grandparents. It was the last time I saw my grandfather and I could see the man he had been: a head of family and of the Mapuche community. When he died, the only thing I claimed is this hat that I had seen him wear and which was so truly him" (see photo below).



© Irène Jonas

For most of them, furniture and family objects had disappeared to a vast extent.

"When I returned to Chile after 17 years' absence, I found former objects of my house at my uncles'. I did not dare to claim them because my mother had given them to my uncles in the first place. But one day, I had a word with my cousin, he had a very beautiful seat which I had had in my study, and a lamp. I told him that I left the armchair to him, but that I would like to retrieve the lamp. He sulked a bit for a start, but he eventually gave it back to me. Because I was the one who had made that lamp with an inkwell that was in the bank where I was working before the coup. When I joined the bank in 1956, there were magnificent artefacts made of bronze and of copper, spittoons... After a claim by the workers' unions who cleaned those spittoons and wanted them to be removed, there were turned into inkwells, then we had fountain pens. They offered me one of these inkwells because all the others were about to be scrapped. Now, this lamp is standing on my desk as before" (see photo below).



© Irène Jonas

Some of the family photos are framed, others are placed on shelves, where they are more or less well secured. Photographs of the ancestors, of the couple and of the progeny can often be seen side by side (see photo below).



© Irène Jonas

The family photos we can see on the shelves or on the walls represent either members of the Chilean family now-absent, key moments of the exile itinerary or the progeny (children and grandchildren).



(From left to right) at the top: José with a photo of his parents, Hugo with a photo of his father with other inhabitants of the village. At the bottom: Julio with a photo of his children who had returned to live in Chile and Maria-Theresa with a photo of herself and of Arauco when they met in the Cimade.

© Irène Jonas

Maria Theresa (on the photograph above in the bottom right) shows us a photograph which is highly symbolic to her. In 1973, she was 20, very active in the Chilean Socialist Party, working for one of the directors of the ministry of transports and raising both her children on her own. After the coup, she was demoted to the cellar to stick envelopes under the surveillance of a machine-gun. In 1974, after she had been questioned on her work place, her family made her leave the country as soon as possible. She left on her own, leaving both her children in Chile. At the Cimade¹², she met Arauco, a Chilean exile as well. The photo she chose to show us and with which she wished to pose is symbolic to a founding moment which enabled her both to bring her children from Chile and to create a family in France:

"Our son was born in 1982, but I must admit that both my older children were adopted by Arauco ... It took four years and a half to start afresh, learn the language, find a job that enabled us to rent something decent. The Cimade helped us because Pinochet demanded a tax to let the children, who had neither father nor mother, go, and Arauco and I had to get married. He was giving Spanish lessons and we could rent a three-room flat in Sceaux thanks to a Spaniard, the son of a Republican, who worked by an estate agent and who took the necessary steps so that we could rent the place and bring the children back".

She showed us, without wanting us to reproduce it, a photo she took at the Santiago airport on the day of her departure, when she bid goodbye to her children.

Erasmus arrived in France in 1976 after a first exile in Argentina. In France, he met Joëlle, a history teacher, who attended support groups for the Chilean people and gave some of her time to teach French. An enlarged photo of their wedding in France stands on a shelf side by side with the Chilean flag and close to the bookcase. This photograph symbolises the switch from a life when the exile in France was experienced as temporary to a real settlement in this country:

"I never thought of leaving Chile. Why should I? I was very happy and there was a real political project. We would leave Chile because there was an imminent danger, but we would come back the day after. We wanted to try and organise resistance from the outside, which we did with the means we had. In France, returning seemed more remote, but we endeavoured to succeed. Then time went by and we began to settle in France little by little. I started to have roots here and what changed my frame of mind was meeting my wife. From then on, the emotional connections were stronger and there were increasingly responsibilities at work" (see photo below).

¹² The Cimade is an ecumenical service created in 1939 which welcomes and accommodates migrants and asylum seekers in care centres, offers expertise and advice to foreigners and acts "here" and "over there" to people forced to leave their region or their country.



© Jean-François Noël

The way objects are arranged in the home reflects the hierarchy of the souvenirs, classifies them by themes or events. They can be seen in sequences as a historical account or a dialogue with each other (Turgeon 2007). Images or objects associated with several periods of the lives of the Chilean exiled stay alongside on the walls or on the bookshelves. For some people, one could even talk of a "concentrate of life" as flagrantly shown by the accumulation of artefacts. In addition to the books in Spanish, the following snapshots represent members of the Chilean family, of the French one, traces of the political and activist commitment with the Popular Unity (bust of Lenin, etc.) in France or in today's Chile (a photography of Michèle Bachelet) as well as artisanal objects brought back from trips to Chile. A framed maternal portrait can be seen on another bookshelf between books and wooden figurines (see photo below).



© Jean-François Noël

However, it ought to be stressed that the distinction between the different types of figures is far from being as clearly defined. Both types of "artisanal" and "activist" figures are sometimes confused since their content is directly associated with the struggles or a reason for being activist, like helping the prisoners. Certain "intimate figures" may thus be objects manufactured by the prisoners intended for their family (spouses, children) or public photographs which take on a private dimension because the person is included therein.

Between intimate and politics

Patricio was an almoner in prisons when he was arrested with Auri who was working with him. Tortured in the Grimaldi Villa and imprisoned in the concentration camp of "Tres Alamos", they succeeded in leaving Chile in January 1976. After having obtained from the pope to be freed from his priestly engagement, Patricio married Auri with whom he is still living today. One object, made in concentration camps, never left him:

"It is a piece of nickel. I engraved it when we were in the camp in "Tres Alamos", it was the three poplars. I was shown how to proceed ... and there, on the other side, the name Auri has been marked. It is an object which left with us to France, which we brought back to Chile in 1989 when we decided to go back and which came back to France with us after three years" (see photo below).



© Irène Jonas

Before even the interview had started, Edicto had prepared on the table of the dining-room a small photo album and a black engraved stone. On 11 September 1973 he burnt or buried all the compromising papers and left home to preserve his family. He stayed one month underground. Once he was arrested, he was tortured in both camps where he was interned. Once he was judged by a military tribunal, he was deported with other comrades on the Dawson island where a former Nazi had erected a concentration camp (see photo below).



© Jean-François Noël

"Here is the living material ... These are stones which I made in concentration camps in the Dawson island in 1974 for my children. This is a resistance stone, I dedicated it to my son who was nine years old. Now, he is a Spanish teacher at the INSA in Lyon. My daughter has got all these stones, except that one which I keep. She wanted to keep these stones which are dedicated to my wife and my four children. We can see the surname and the first name and a stone for every children. I have written texts on stones, it was a symbolic act of resistance, we made it with spiked tips of barbed wire which had fallen on the ground when the inmates enclosed the camp. When we wandered inside the camp, we would rub the ground with our feet and we were looking for spikes. Sometimes, we had one hour out, "freedom" on the island, it is thus that we picked up the stones on the beach and we kept them preciously with a small number of socialist and communist comrades. It took me almost one month to make a stone, and every time I picked up a stone, my fingers needed time to heal and then we hid the stones. If a stone like that had fallen into the hands of the soldiers, we would have been dead. And then, we were lucky to find a loyal officer, there were a few of them and he was the one who let them get out. It was a long travel, from the island to Punta Arena and from Punta Arena to our homes. They had fallen into three or four hands, it was a chain. For me, it was a moral obligation of resistance, we had to keep a stiff upper lip. And even if we died, the stones were there, like a testimony. The stones I made were always intended for the ones I loved. Love, resistance, struggle were reflected in the stones".

Angelica was very active with the Chilean women in France¹³. The text which accompanied the dolls they manufactured and sold in France (emulating the model of those created by imprisoned Chilean women) was meant to support Chilean people.

"One of us said one day that we might manufacture chiffon dolls as before: I believe that Nora was the one to make the first drawing on paper. We cut the first one out of a shirt of Juanita (she gave us lessons in history) and we stuffed it with mattress padding. Lucia gave us the wool of a jumper she was not wearing any longer, to make the hair. "SOPOROPPO" was born very dishevelled, but quite unique. I hit the idea of drawing her mouth and the eyes with the fountain pen I used for writing" (extract of the letter enclosed with the doll).

Not only did these objects represent mothers torn from their children under the dictatorship. They also showed the political and feminist dimension and the role played by the women during the repression in Chile as well as in exile, that is so little known:

"We have reproduced these objects and the text which has been written because they epitomised the unrecognised part played by women and the struggle for freedom. In Chile, there is no recognition for the women and I find it is a pity because we were part of history and it is unfair" (see photo below).



© Jean-François Noël

¹³ Angelica was quite active with the "Marta Ugarte" collective, then the collective of Franco-Chilean Women (COFECH).

Other examples can be found: the *arpilleras* undoubtedly constitute the most symbolic artisanal production of the period of the dictatorship. The *arpilleras* are paintings entirely manufactured with textiles. During the dictatorship, they were used by families of prisoners both as a means of expression and as a source of incomes. Numerous copies were imported to France in the 1970s, notably by the Cimade. Nevertheless, we could not see any one on the walls of the dwellings of exiled whom we visited. First of all, and quite simply, because their vocation was to be sold for the benefit of the prisoners' families. When they could pay for it, the exiled themselves partook of that form of financial solidarity and hung *arpilleras* in their dwellings. They have disappeared today because they have been given as gifts (to the friends, to the members of the family) but undoubtedly also because they have had fewer grounds to be visible after the liberation of the prisoners (see photo below).



© personal archives of Francisco Guajardo-Adam. «Priso », «every man is entitled to life and to freedom».

Between public archives and private archives

Some of our interviewees have sought and kept preciously everything related to the Popular Unity and to the coup. Folders thus include newspaper articles and the few personal and public photographs of the events.

Hugo was member of Salvador Allende's inner circle (GAP) and thus stayed with him until the Moneda was bombed. Once Allende had required from them unconditioned surrender to avoid a useless massacre, he came out of the Palace and was part of the men lying on the ground and threatened by the caterpillars of a tank, as shown by a photograph which went round the world. After he had been arrested and placed in detention in the Chile stadium then in the Nacional stadium, he seized the opportunity of a disorganisation of the soldiers to lie about the causes of his arrest.

"We did not know what was going to happen, I saw people I knew, but they did not talk so as to protect me. When journalists came by, I hid inside so that they could not recognise me, although I had my photo in several magazines. When I was questioned, I said that I had been arrested because I was walking the streets at night after the curfew. I came out one month later, but I did not know where to go".

Once he had been freed, he went underground and nuns helped him and his brother to leave Chile on 28 November 1973. He kept preciously in several folders the testimonies of that time, the covers of periodicals and the photographs on which he appeared alongside Salvador Allende (see photo below).



collection Hugo Garcia

© *personal archives of Hugo Garcia*



© *Irène Jonas*

Francisco has been seeking for several years articles, photos, documents, chronicles or historical books about his native town of Valparaíso and made this activity be an important part of his life in exile:

"I think that it has helped bounce back a lot, because that time of the coup was so awful that one had to bounce back one way or the other and I have been using all these souvenirs to bounce back. My mother and my brother kept every article on Valparaíso for me and as soon as someone came to France, he would bring it to me and I read and read".

His carefully arranged folders include the few images he still owns from his political activity under the Popular Unity or his life in France and a more personal and painful image: "It is the last photo I have of my children and me in Chile, I knew I would have to leave Chile on my own" (see photo below on the right).



© Irène Jonas

Conclusion

The word "home" encompasses several functions. It provides both a shelter and a security, a place of activities and sociability as well as an anchor in the territory. "Habitat also refers to the inhabitant's awareness of his own interiority, his secrets, his family and domestic life, his private arrangements; in a nutshell, of his intimacy" (Serfaty-Gazon 2003 : 66). The Chilean exiled first tended to reject the notion of a "home" in France. It was then a space that became necessary to

obtain and to customise. It was only when they accepted that the situation of exile was there to stay, that they started to reproduce in that space a setting which contained the salient artefacts of their culture of origin. These decorative figures, as we have seen, are intermingled and overlap each other beyond the barriers of intimacy and politics, of the private and public lives, in Chile and in France. These objects constitute decorative figures made a posteriori along with the visits of their families or their returns to their native land. They correspond as well to the different skins through which the broken destiny of the exiled become a reconstructed one.

"I have the feeling of not belonging anywhere, I do not belong in France or in Chile. I cannot cut my roots off, Chile is the country where I was born, but France is a country which I have learned to love"

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MEDIA-ESSAY

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Keywords

Urban ethnography; ethnographic writing; multimedia; public space; Barcelona

At the Heart of the City: an Essay in Sound and Image Ethnography

This essay only makes sense here when accompanied by the article *Photoethnography of the urban space or how to describe the urban world beyond words: presentation of a multimedia essay*, included in this issue. It was the starting-point for the audio-visual reflection we presented at the conference that followed the 25th *Bilan du Film Ethnographique* in Paris. Our montage was accompanied by a text presenting our approach and entitled *Essai d'ethnographie visuelle ou comment cerner le pouls de la place de Catalogne au travers de photographies et d'ambiances sonores*. That text is available at: <http://comitedufilmethnographique.com/nadja-monnet-et-maribel-tovar/>.

Conceived as an ethnographic narrative, the montage available here makes it possible to present the various actors and mechanisms in play in a central square in Barcelona. It aimed to be a synthesis of our research in the Plaça de Catalunya, carried out for the Inventory of Ethnological Heritage of Catalonia,

under the Department of Culture of the Catalan Government (Generalitat de Catalunya). From the start of our research, the photos taken and the sounds recorded in the square were converted into working tools and sources of reflection that enabled us to construct the ethnography of the square.

Hence our decision to present the results of our research through a photo montage, accompanied by sound ambiances, rather than to make a film. Like Albert Piette, we are committed to the “photographic click” as an ideal method for discovering the smallest details of everyday life.

Au cœur de la ville : essai d'ethnographie sonore et visuelle

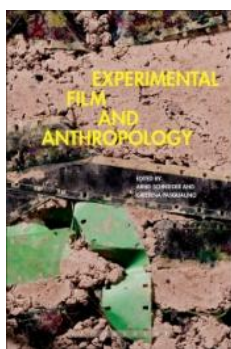
Cet essai n'a de sens ici qu'accompagné de l'article *Photoethnographier l'espace urbain ou comment (d)écrire l'urbain au-delà des mots : présentation d'un essai multimédia*, inclus dans ce numéro. Il est le point de départ de notre réflexion audio-visuelle que nous avons présenté au colloque qui a suivi la 25^{ème} édition du Bilan du Film Ethnographique à Paris. Ce montage était accompagné d'un texte intitulé « Essai d'ethnographie visuelle ou comment cerner le pouls de la place de Catalogne au travers de photographies et d'ambiances sonores » qui présente notre démarche. Il est disponible sur le lien suivant : <http://comitedufilmethnographique.com/nadja-monnet-et-maribel-tovar/> .

Conçu comme une narration ethnographique, le montage disponible ici, permet de présenter les différents acteurs et mécanismes en jeu de cette place centrale à Barcelone. Il se voulait la synthèse de notre recherche sur la place de la Catalogne, réalisée pour l'Inventaire du Patrimoine Ethnologique de Catalogne, du Département de la Culture du gouvernement catalan (Generalitat de Catalunya). Dès le début de notre recherche, les photographies et les sons captés sur la Place se sont véritablement convertis en outils de travail et en sources de réflexions, qui nous ont permis de construire l'ethnographie de cette place.

D'où le parti pris de présenter les résultats de notre recherche par un montage photographique, accompagné d'ambiances sonores, plutôt que la réalisation d'un film parce qu'à la suite d'Albert Piette, nous revendiquons le déclic photographique comme une méthode idéale pour découvrir les plus petits détails de la vie quotidienne.



BOOKS, FILM, MULTIMEDIA RECEIVED



Schneider, Arnd - Pasqualino, Caterina
Experimental Film and Anthropology
2014, Bloomsbury

Experimental Film and Anthropology urges a new dialogue between two seemingly separate fields. The book explores the practical and theoretical challenges arising from experimental film for anthropology, and vice versa, through a number of contact zones: trance, emotions and the senses, materiality and time, non-narrative content and montage. Experimental film and cinema are understood in this book as broad, inclusive categories covering many technical formats and historical traditions, to investigate the potential for new common practices.

An international range of renowned anthropologists, film scholars and experimental film-makers engage in vibrant discussion and offer important new insights for all students and scholars involved in producing their own films. This will be indispensable reading for students and scholars in a range of disciplines including anthropology, visual anthropology, visual culture and film and media studies.



Tiragallo, Felice
Visioni intenzionali. Sguardi esperti, materialità e immaginario in ricerche di etnografia visiva
2014, Carocci

"Visioni intenzionali" è una proposta d'interpretazione degli approcci visivi alla conoscenza nel lavoro etnografico, basata su alcune esperienze di ricerca ripensate, riconsiderate e presentate all'interno del dibattito attuale sulla visual anthropology, in cui il vedere gli altri e vedere come vedono gli altri diventano lo scopo plausibile della ricerca etnografica solo se si mette in gioco e si considera l'intero campo delle relazioni sociali fra chi osserva e chi è osservato. Fare un film etnografico, fare un'indagine fotografica è lasciare la traccia di un rapporto complesso che lega e fonde i due poli reciproci del vedere e dell'essere visti. Vedere "etnograficamente" attraverso il film significa anche consegnarsi a un dialogo e a una condivisione sociale difficile e rischiosa, ma che può consentire l'accesso a forme di conoscenza diverse e non antagoniste a quelle espresse dal testo scritto. Il libro esplora e riflette su queste

possibilità d'indagine considerando temi etnografici come lo spopolamento rurale, le abilità tessili, le nuove articolazioni del dono cerimoniale e la memoria dello sguardo positivista in vari luoghi della Sardegna contemporanea.



Candau, Joel - Le Gonidec, Barbara (sous la direction)

Paysages sensoriels. Essai d'anthropologie de la construction et de la perception de l'environnement sonore

2013, Editions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques

Une approche anthropologique de la notion de paysage sonore proposant des outils conceptuels à même de définir une "ethnologie du son". Des articles pluridisciplinaires mettent en lumière les mécanismes sociaux et cognitifs de constitution d'un environnement sonore. Du Caire à Naples en passant par les vignobles français et Londres, ils interrogent la multiplication et la standardisation des sons.



Canclini, Nestor Garcia

Art beyond Itself: Anthropology for a Society

without a Story Line

2014, Berg Publisher

First published in Spanish in 2010, *Art beyond Itself* is Néstor García Canclini's deft assessment of contemporary art. The renowned cultural critic suggests that, ideally, art is the place of imminence, the place where we glimpse something just about to happen. Yet, as he demonstrates, defining contemporary art and its role in society is an ever more complicated endeavor. Museums, auction houses, artists, and major actors in economics, politics, and the media are increasingly chummy and interdependent. Art is expanding into urban development and the design and tourism industries. Art practices based on objects are displaced by practices based on contexts. Aesthetic distinctions dissolve as artworks are inserted into the media, urban spaces, digital networks, and social forums. Oppositional artists are adrift in a society without a clear story line. What, after all, counts as transgression in a world of diverse and fragmentary narratives? Seeking a new analytic framework for understanding contemporary art, García Canclini is attentive to particular artworks; to artists including Francis Alÿs, León Ferrari, Teresa Margolles, Antoni Muntadas, and Gabriel Orozco; and to efforts to preserve, for art and artists, some degree of independence from religion, politics, the media, and the market.



Tabb, Phillip – Deviren, A. Senem

The Greening of Architecture. A Critical History and Survey of Contemporary Sustainable Architecture and Urban Design

2013, Ashgate

Contemporary architecture, and the culture it reflects dependent as it is on fossil fuels, has contributed to the cause and necessity of a burgeoning green process that emerged over the past half century. This text is the first to offer a comprehensive critical history and analysis of the greening of architecture through accumulative reduction of negative environmental effects caused by buildings, urban designs and settlements. Describing the progressive development of green architecture from 1960 to 2010, it illustrates how it is ever evolving and ameliorated through alterations in form, technology, materials and use and it examines different places worldwide that represent a diversity of cultural and climatic contexts.

The book is divided into seven chapters: with an overview of the environmental issues and the nature of green architecture in response to them, followed by an historic perspective of the pioneering evolution of green technology and architectural integration over the past five decades, and finally, providing the intransigent and culturally pervasive current examples within a wide range of geographic territories.

The greening of architecture is seen as an evolutionary process that is informed by significant world events, climate change, environmental theories, movements in architecture, technological innovations, and seminal works in architecture and planning throughout each decade over the past fifty years. This time period is bounded on one end by the awareness of environmental problems beginning in the 1960's, the influential texts by Rachel Carson, E.F. Schumacher, Buckminster Fuller and Stewart Brand, and the impact of the OPEC Oil Embargo of 1973, and on the other end the pervasiveness of the necessary greening of architecture that includes, systemic reforms in architectural and urban design, land use planning, transportation, agriculture, and energy production found in the 2000's. The greening process moves from remediation to holistic models of architecture.

Geographical landscapes give a global account of the greening process where some examples are parallel and sympathetic, and others are in clear contrast to one another with very

individuated approaches. Certain events, like the Rio Summit in 1992 and Kyoto Protocol in 1997, and themes, such as the Hannover Principles in 2000, provide a dynamic ideological critique as well as a formal and technical discussion of the embodied and accumulative content of greening principles in architecture.

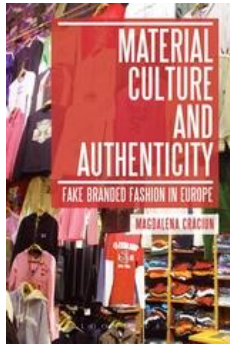


Bredeloup, Sylvie

Migrations d'aventures. Terrains africains

2014, CTHS

Considérer l'aventure comme une clé de lecture permet de jeter un regard décalé sur les migrations africaines et de sortir de l'ombre le caractère incertain et souvent individuel de l'expérience migratoire. En s'auto-désignant aventuriers, des migrants d'Afrique subsaharienne ré-enchantent leurs parcours et expriment, en creux, leur désir intense d'exister ailleurs et autrement que dans les directions où ils sont attendus. Les migrations d'aventures se transforment en mode d'existence dès lors où la réalisation de soi prime sur tout projet économique ou politique. Sylvie Bredeloup analyse la manière dont ces migrations d'aventures peuvent prendre des formes plurielles en fonction des temps, des lieux, du genre ou des imaginaires.

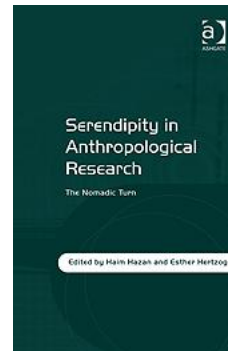


Craciun, Magdalena
Material Culture and Authenticity. Fake Branded Fashion in Europe
 2014, Bloomsbury

The study of material culture demonstrates that objects make people just as much as people make, exchange and consume objects. But what if these objects are, in the eyes of others, only fakes? What kind of material mirror are people looking into? Are their real selves really reflected in this mirror? This book provides an original and revealing study into engagements with objects that are not what they are claimed and presumed to be and, subsequently, are believed to betray their makers as well as users.

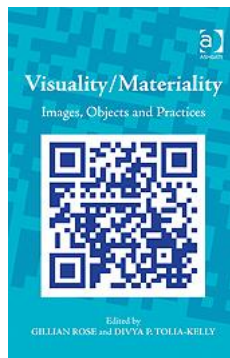
Drawing upon an ethnography of fake branded garments in Turkey and Romania, *Material Culture and Authenticity* shows how people can make authentic positions for themselves in and through fake objects.

The book will be of interest to students and scholars working in the fields of anthropology, material culture and cultural studies as well as to general readers interested in ethnographic alternatives to biographies of famous fakers and fakes.



Hazan, Haim - Hertzog, Esther (eds)
Serendipity in Anthropological Research. The Nomadic Turn
 2012, Ashgate

Challenging the idea that fieldwork is the only way to gather data, and that standard methods are the sole route to fruitful analysis, *Serendipity in Anthropological Research* explores the role of fortune and happenstance in anthropology. It conceives of anthropological research as a lifelong nomadic journey of discovery in which the world yields an infinite number of unexplored issues and innumerable ways of studying them, each study producing its own questions and demanding its own methodologies. Drawing together the latest research from a team of senior scholars from around the world to reflect on the experience of research, *Serendipity in Anthropological Research* presents rich new case studies from Europe and the Middle East to examine both new and old questions in novel and enriching ways. An engaging examination of methodology and anthropological fieldwork, this book will appeal to all those concerned with writing ethnography.

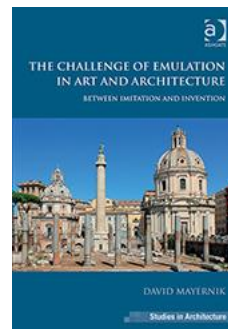


Rose, Gillian - Tolia-Kelly, Divya P.
Visuality/Materiality. Images, Objects and Practices
 2012, Ashgate

Two of the key theoretical shifts over the past two decades of critical work have been the 'visual turn' and the 'material turn'. This book argues that these hitherto distinct fields should be understood as in continual dialogue and co-constitution and focuses on reconceptualising the visual as an embodied, material, and often politically-charged realm.

This edited volume elaborates this conceptual argument through a series of contemporary case studies, drawn from the disciplines of Architecture, Sociology, Media Studies, Geography and Cultural Studies. The case studies included are paired around four themes: consumption, translation, practice and ethics.

As well as exploring the bringing together of visuality and materiality studies, the contributors raise questions of social identity and social critique, and also focus on the ethics of material visualities.



Mayernik, David
The Challenge of Emulation in Art and Architecture. Between Imitation and Invention
 2013, Ashgate

Emulation is a challenging middle ground between imitation and invention. The idea of rivaling by means of imitation, as old as the Aeneid and as modern as Michelangelo, fit neither the pessimistic deference of the neoclassicists nor the revolutionary spirit of the Romantics. Emulation thus disappeared along with the Renaissance humanist tradition, but it is slowly being recovered in the scholarship of Roman art. It remains to recover emulation for the Renaissance itself, and to revivify it for modern practice.

Mayernik argues that it was the absence of a coherent understanding of emulation that fostered the fissuring of artistic production in the later eighteenth century into those devoted to copying the past and those interested in continual novelty, a situation solidified over the course of the nineteenth century and mostly taken for granted today. This book is a unique contribution to our understanding of the historical phenomenon of emulation, and perhaps more importantly a timely argument for its value to contemporary practice.



Haralambidou, Penelope
Marcel Duchamp and the Architecture of Desire
 2013, Ashgate

While much has been written on Marcel Duchamp - one of the twentieth century's most beguiling artists - the subject of his flirtation with architecture seems to have been largely overlooked. Yet, in the carefully arranged plans and sections organising the blueprint of desire in the Large Glass, his numerous pieces replicating architectural fragments, and his involvement in designing exhibitions, Duchamp's fascination with architectural design is clearly evident.

As his unconventional architectural influences - Nicéron, Lequeu and Kiesler - and diverse legacy - Tschumi, OMA, Webb, Diller + Scofidio and Nicholson - indicate, Duchamp was not as much interested in 'built' architecture as he was in the architecture of desire, re-constructing the imagination through drawing and testing the boundaries between reality and its aesthetic and philosophical possibilities.

Marcel Duchamp and the Architecture of Desire examines the link between architectural thinking and Duchamp's work. By employing design, drawing and making - the tools of the architect - Haralambidou performs an architectural analysis of Duchamp's final enigmatic work *Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas...* demonstrating an innovative research methodology able to grasp meaning beyond textual analysis. This novel reading of his ideas and methods adds to, but also challenges, other art-historical interpretations. Through three main themes - allegory, visibility and desire - the book defines and theorises an alternative drawing practice positioned between art and architecture that predates and includes Duchamp.

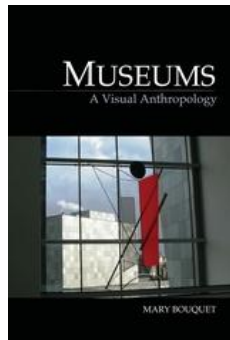


Cruz, Marcos
The Inhabitable Flesh of Architecture
 2013, Ashgate

Today's architecture has failed the body with its long heritage of purity of form and aesthetic of cleanliness. A resurgence of interest in flesh, especially in art, has led to a politics of abjection, completely changing traditional aesthetics, and is now giving light to an alternative discussion about the body in architecture. This book is dedicated to a future vision of the body in architecture, questioning the contemporary relationship between our Human Flesh and the changing Architectural Flesh.

Through the analysis and design of a variety of buildings and projects, *Flesh* is proposed as a concept that extends the meaning of skin, one of architecture's most fundamental metaphors. It seeks to challenge a common misunderstanding of skin as a flat and thin surface. In a time when a pervasive discourse about the impact of digital technologies risks turning the architectural skin ever more disembodied, this book argues for a thick embodied flesh by exploring architectural interfaces that are truly inhabitable.

Different concepts of *Flesh* are investigated, not only concerning the architectural and aesthetic, but also the biological aspects. The latter is materialised in form of Synthetic Neoplasms, which are proposed as new semi-living entities, rather than more commonly derived from scaled-up analogies between biological systems and larger scale architectural constructs. These 'neoplastic' creations are identified as partly designed object and partly living material, in which the line between the natural and the artificial is progressively blurred. Hybrid technologies and interdisciplinary work methodologies are thus required, and lead to a revision of our current architectural practice.



Bouquet, Mary

Museums. A Visual Anthropology

2012, Bloomsbury

Museums: A Visual Anthropology provides a clear and concise summary of the key ideas, debates and texts of the most important approaches to the study of museums from around the world. The book examines ways to address the social relations of museums, embedded in their sites, collections, and exhibitions, as an integral part of the visual and material culture they comprise.

Cross-disciplinary in scope, *Museums* uses ideas and approaches both from within and outside of anthropology to further students' knowledge of and interest in museums. Including selected, globally based case studies to highlight and exemplify important issues, the book also contains suggested Further Reading for each chapter, for students to expand their learning independently.

Exploring fundamental methods and approaches to engage this constantly evolving time machine, *Museums* will be essential reading for students of anthropology and museum studies.